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R.F. Mariano, Editor
STR Publishing, Inc.
Voice: 1-904-292-9222 10am-5pm EST
FAX: 904-268-2237 24hrs
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The Publisher, Staff & Editors

Celebrating Our Tenth Year!
1987-1997

Florida Lotto - LottoMan v1.35
Results: 11/15/97: three of six numbers with no matches

>From the Editor's Desk...

It that time of the year when we are reminded that we must take into consideration the well being of our fellow human beings who are less fortunate than we are. I speak of the homeless folks we all see in our home towns. When you're in that supermarket. buy a few extra cans of food and drop them off at your favorite charitable organization like the Salvation Army, Red Cross etc..

Comdex has sown its seeds. the DOJ is deeply embroiled in trying to justify the noises they've made in Microsoft's direction. Janet Reno is busy fussing at herself in a mirror after having been told that a Japanese Tabloid had her picture on the front cover with the story about how she was voted; "the most desirable to be shipwrecked and marooned on an island with" by Japanese men. Maybe she'll go there and become a "Pinup Girl".

I'd like to wish everyone a wonderful Thanksgiving Holiday and also to remind folks that this time frame is also the anniversary of the assassination of JFK. Hopefully, one day. we'll know the whole truth about what took place in Dallas, Texas on November 22, 1963

Ralph...

Of Special Note:

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STReport is now ready to offer much more in the way of serving the Networks, Online Services and Internet's vast, fast growing site list and userbase. We now have our very own WEB/FTP Site, do stop by and have a look see. Since We've received numerous requests to receive STReport from a wide variety of Internet addressees, we were compelled to put together an Internet distribution mailing list for those who wished to receive STReport on a regular basis, the file is ZIPPED, then UUENCODED. Unfortunately, we've also received a number of opinions that the UUENCODING was a real pain to deal with. You'll be pleased to know you are able to download STReport directly from our very own FTP SERVER or WEB Site. While there, be sure to join our STR AutoMailer list which allows a choice of either ASCII or Acrobat PDF.

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Dana P. Jacobson, Editor, Current Affairs

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Brian Boucher

Jeremy Sereno
Angelo Marasco

Daniel Stidham
Donna Lines

Please submit ALL letters, rebuttals, articles, reviews, etc., via E-Mail w/attachment to:

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STRreport Headline News

LATE BREAKING INDUSTRY-WIDE NEWS

Weekly Happenings in the Computer World

Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

Gates, Nader Exchange Barbs

Separated by 3,000 miles, Microsoft Corp. chief Bill Gates exchanged verbal fire yesterday with consumer advocate Ralph Nader who is heading a two-day Washington conference that is scrutinizing Gates' business practices.

Speaking at Microsoft's shareholders meeting in Seattle, Gates said the Nader conference and government investigations of Microsoft are creating a

"witch hunt" atmosphere that could aid his competitors. And Nader, turned down by Gates and other top Microsoft officials for appearances at the conference, called the statement a "paranoid style of response ... typical of Bill Gates and too many Microsoft top executives."

Meanwhile, at the Nader's conference, a Texas law enforcement official called on potential witnesses to come forward and help build a case against the huge software company. Says Sam Goodhope, special assistant to Texas Attorney General Dan Morales, "You have to help us help you. You're complaining a lot, but you've got to come forward. If you're afraid to give us information, it doesn't do us any good." Reporting for the Reuter News Service, writer David Lawsky notes, "One theme of the conference was that Microsoft has used intimidating tactics to defeat competitors."

As reported earlier, the Texas attorney general's office has sued Microsoft, asking a judge to nullify secrecy agreements that require other companies to notify the Redmond, Washington-based software giant before talking to government investigators. A Microsoft spokesman said such secrecy agreements are standard in the industry.

Gates told his shareholders that government investigations of his company and the Nader conference were out to hurt Microsoft and help its competitors, suggesting Nader was acting because he was getting money from Microsoft competitors, who were well represented at the conference.

Said Gates, "We do have some competitors who have chosen to fund these things and promote these activities in order to handicap Microsoft in the competitive market." Lawsky reports Microsoft Vice President Robert Herbold wrote Nader one day earlier that he found it "curious that the conference was advertised in full-page national newspaper ads costing upwards of \$50,000 apiece," referring to a New York Times ad.

But, says Reuters, "Nader laughed about the charge. He said the ad cost less than one-tenth that -- \$3,200 -- because it ran only in the paper's California edition. Nader said Gates was 'refusing to address the issues raised at the conference. ... He is still in virtual reality and out of touch with what is the growing public challenge to his company's power abuses and intimidations.'"

Gates contends this is part of a coordinated campaign by Microsoft to counter increasing attacks on its expansion into new markets. On another front, Lawsky says, "Those at the conference underscored the Texas lawman's call for companies to come forward. Christine Varney, a former Federal Trade Commission member now representing a key Microsoft competitor, said there are lots of private complaints about Microsoft, but 'the whispering campaign is irrelevant.'"

Also, Lloyd Constantine, managing partner of Constantine & Partners law firm in New York, is quoted by Lawsky as saying witnesses are not enough. Congress must act, he said, to put new life into the nation's antitrust laws because they had been eviscerated by a timid Supreme Court and a dozen years of lax enforcement during the presidencies of Ronald Reagan and George Bush.

Varney, who works at Hogan & Hartson, told the wire service she thinks the laws are sufficient but that monopolists need to be brought to justice if they violate the law, adding, "There is no such thing as a benevolent monopolist." She said monopolists extract "rents," which are excessive prices and profits.

Gates Opens Comdex With Gags

Opening the five-day Comdex computer show in Las Vegas last night, Microsoft Corp. chairman Bill Gates showed that playing hardball with the U.S. Justice Department and consumer advocate Ralph Nader hasn't dulled his sense of humor. Business writer David E. Kalish of The Associated Press reports Gates "painted himself as ... a regular Joe who likes a few good knee-slappers ... working the crowd of thousands with gags, video clips and self-deprecating humor that had everyone laughing."

Jokes in Gates' keynote address were intended to show the importance of the personal computer and Internet. Taking a cue from CBS comedian Dave Letterman, Gates listed his "Top 10 Reasons Why I Love my PC," such as:

- '• Reason No. 5: "In just one weekend I can sit at my PC, collaborate with attorneys all over the world, comment on a 48-page legal brief and e-mail it to the Department of Justice."
- '• Reason No. 1: "I can use Microsoft CarPoint (online car ads) to show Ralph Nader my Corvair collection."

Kalish says Gates used video clips on two giant overhead screens "to perform an outrageous parody of his tendency to repeat jargon," adding, "Excerpts from different industry speeches were combined to make Gates seem ridiculous, as he repeated the same dense words and phrases, including 'scalability,' 'manageability' and 'NC stands for Not Compatible.'" Gates even enlisted the U.S. Marines for a little help. As the Marines' anthem blared, an officer dressed in full uniform marched on stage to show how Windows software has helped make mobile computers an essential piece of battlefield equipment.

Throwing a laptop on the floor and stomping on it to illustrate its rugged outer shell, the officer said, "I wouldn't characterize it as Marine proof, but it's clearly Marine resistant." Meanwhile, a record number of attenders are expected for this year's trade show, where, says the Reuter News Service, they "will find a cornucopia of industry treats ranging from newly minted Star Trek mousepads to freshly funded startup companies eager for publicity."

Piggybacking on this year's show will be the Comdex venture forum, highlighting some 38 companies. Chris Alden, editorial director of The Red Herring magazine and show group that is sponsoring the gathering of young companies at Comdex, told Reuters it is taking on more global and futuristic issues this year. Adds Reuters, "The conference will also tap into global trends, including views on how the Internet will evolve from representatives of Microsoft Corp., Xerox Corp.'s Xerox PARC laboratories and a member of Britain's Parliament, Derek Wyatt."

Sun Urges Judge Block Microsoft

A federal court has been asked to bar Microsoft Corp. from using Sun Microsystems Inc.'s "Java Compatible" logo in relation to Microsoft's Web browser. Reporting from Palo Alto, California, the Reuter News Service says Sun's request, filed late yesterday in the San Jose Division of the U.S. District Court's Northern California District, extends Sun's claim that Microsoft improperly modified Sun's Java technology in Microsoft's Internet Explorer 4.0 browser, released at the end of September.

In related developments, Sun says:

- '• It has received support from 20 of 25 national technical groups in the

company's drive to be designated as the international standard-setter for Java technologies.

- Two independent technical experts had confirmed that Microsoft's products fail Sun's compatibility tests.
- Sun's filing documents include a response to Microsoft's countersuit, which alleged that Sun, not Microsoft, broke the terms of the companies' Java licensing contracts.

The computer maker is seeking a temporary injunction barring use of its Java Compatible logo by Microsoft because Microsoft continued to use it on consumer packaging and promotional materials, says Sun Vice President Michael Morris, who added, "It's like buying a can of Coca-Cola and finding ginger ale inside...The customer trusted the brand and was deceived."

'Dilbert' Creator Pulls Hoax

Dilbert comics creator Scott Adams recently pulled a hoax, posing as a consultant and spouting nonsense at a meeting with executives of a high-tech company. And -- surprise! -- most of them followed the boss's lead and just nodded in agreement.

An account of the hoax at last month at Logitech International -- the world's biggest maker of computer mice -- was published this morning in The San Jose Mercury News' Sunday magazine, West. The Associated Press says Adams pulled off the deception with the cooperation of Pierluigi Zappacosta, Logitech co-founder and vice chairman.

"Zappacosta summoned executives to a meeting with Adams -- alias Ray Mebert -- to draft a new mission statement for Logitech's New Ventures Group," AP says. "His memo touted Mebert as an expert who could help the group 'crisply define' its goals." "What if I was a management consultant?" Adams wondered. "I could lead a bunch of executives in writing a mission statement so impossibly complicated that it has no real context whatsoever."

Adams, whose strip appears in 1,700 newspapers in 51 countries, disguised himself with a wig and fake mustache. He also arrived at Logitech's Fremont, California, headquarters in the company of a photographer, videotaping crew and a writer and told the group his credentials included work on Procter & Gamble Co.'s "Taste Bright Project," a supposedly secret effort to boost sales by improving the taste of soap.

There the fun began:

Said Mebert, "There actually are some people who admitted in focus groups that they would sometimes taste soap." Executives nodded agreement. Mebert sneered at the New Ventures Group's existing statement -- "to provide Logitech with profitable growth and related new business areas" -- and led an exercise in which managers suggested words and ideas that might become part of a new one.

The resulting new statement read: "The New Ventures Mission is to scout profitable growth opportunities in relationships, both internally and externally, in emerging, mission inclusive markets, and explore new paradigms and then filter and communicate and evangelize the findings." Finally, the speaker drew a last diagram, one he said would bring the session into focus. It was a picture of Dilbert, and Mebert then pulled off his wig, revealing Adams' thinning locks, shouting, "You've all been had."

AP says the executives took the joke with good grace, though Jack Zahorsky, senior program manager for control devices, commented, "If Adams hadn't revealed himself, I wonder how many of us would have gone home and tried tasting our soap?"

CyberAngel Stops Kids' Net Use When Parents Are Gone

FRANKLIN, TENNESSEE, U.S.A., 1997 NOV 17 (Newsbytes) -- / By Sami Menefee, Newsbyte. Computer Sentry Software's CyberAngel is now flying in the virtual heavens to spread its protective wings over computers traveling the Internet. The CyberAngel package includes software and a monitoring service combination that watches for theft or unauthorized use on an Internet accessible computer.

This can be very bad news for Junior, Sissy or the babysitter if they attempt to log on to pornographic sites or unauthorized chat rooms while Mom and Dad are away, company officials said: CyberAngel locks the modem port and sends a message to Mom or Dad snitching off the miscreant. "CyberAngel prevents children or others from getting on the Internet without parental supervision," said Brian Wilcox, CyberAngel marketing director. The passworded program locks up the modem and prevents the unauthorized attempt to get onto the Internet from being made, he said. An e-mail message is then sent to the owner of the system that the unauthorized attempt, or breach, was made.

Nothing more is done at that point, officials said. The parents, boss or whoever is in charge of the system can take steps to prevent the unauthorized use from happening again. The service continues to monitor for unauthorized use, but remains passive.

Said Wilcox, "Many of the kids who spend all their time surfing the Internet are those same kids who spent all their time in front of the Sega or Atari. But now, they sit in their room, talking to another kid on the other side of the world, sitting in his room, and think they are interacting. It's just not so." Parents need to supervise their kids, he said. "It's the parents, not the courts who should monitor what children do, see or hear."

Wilcox then discussed the other part of the CyberAngel service. If the system is stolen, the monitoring agency gets actively involved. Once the monitoring service is notified of the theft, all stops are removed. An incident report is filed and a map tracking the system's location is generated, based on access attempts being made from the system. The owner is notified and given the latest location by phone, fax or pager whenever a new breach occurs.

The service continues to monitor and the owner gives the location information to the local law enforcement agency to get the system back. The program costs \$25 to register, with a \$60 per year fee for the monitoring service. CyberAngel can be downloaded from <http://www.sentryinc.com> .

Survey Finds Vulnerable Sites

A new survey finds that approximately 80 percent of companies operating an electronic commerce Web site experience at least one major network attack per month, with 100 percent experiencing heavy probing (queries to servers or server applications for sensitive network or server information) or reconnaissance from a third party site.

The survey was conducted by NetSolve, an Austin, Texas-based network management services company, between May and September. NetSolve says the data, which was collected from its customers, shows serious attacks occur up to five times per month for customers with high visibility on the Internet. Of the Web attacks detected, 100 percent were targeted at electronic commerce sites and 72 percent originated from sites outside of the U.S.

Nations Warned of Net Scams

Operators of hundreds of Internet Web sites have been warned by consumer protection officials in 25 countries that their get-rich-quick business opportunities and pyramid schemes may be illegal. Associated Press writer John D. McClain says the warning came as a followup to International Internet Sweep Day was conducted a month ago, sponsored by the International Marketing supervision Network, an association of consumer protection law enforcement agencies around the world, and coordinated by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission.

In the U.S., the Federal Trade Commission and the federal Securities Exchange Commission and Commodity Futures Trading Commission joined consumer protection agencies and securities regulators in 22 states in targeting suspect Web sites. The FTC then issued warnings to 180 site operators. "A prime objective of the sweep," says McClain, "was to educate businesses using the Internet about consumer protection laws and to deter any future violations. But the FTC said the sites will be revisited later and, if additional information suggests that they are illegal operations, law enforcement action may be taken."

Director Jodie Bernstein of the FTC's Bureau of Consumer Protection told the wire service, "We want to put computer con artists on notice: Law enforcement agencies throughout the country and around the world are patrolling the Internet."

Consumers are advised by the FTC to:

- '• Investigate all earnings claims.
- '• Beware of phony references.
- '• Avoid any plan that includes commissions for recruiting additional distributors.
- '• Ask for a disclosure document if they are investing in a franchise.
- '• Get specific information about work-at-home plans.
- '• Obtain all promises in writing, including any refund policy.

Among states participating in Internet Sweep Day were Alabama, Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, Nevada, North Dakota, Rhode Island, Texas and Wisconsin. And, besides the U.S., international participants were Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Hungary, Ireland, Jamaica, Japan, Korea, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. For more information on Net scams, visit the FTC web site at <http://www.ftc.gov>.

Intel Fixes New Pentium Flaw

A potentially serious flaw discovered in the Pentium microprocessor can be fixed, Intel Corp. says, by using software, but it could take a while for Intel to distribute the patch to customers. Reporting from Santa Clara,

California, the Reuter News Service says the flaw would let a malicious programmer send an illegal command to the Pentium chip that would freeze the operations of the personal computer or network server.

"The flaw appears in the original Pentium and Pentium with MMX, two of the most popular chips in the world," Reuters notes. "It does not appear in the newer Pentium II."

Intel says it found a software solution to block exploitation of the flaw and is working with major software vendors, such as Microsoft Corp., to implement the fix in various operating system software.

"An Intel spokesman said a specific timeline is not available because there are at least eight operating systems on the market, and delivery of the fix would vary from company to company," says Reuters. Meanwhile, Intel told the wire service the flaw would not occur in everyday use of personal computers. Instead, a programmer would have to intentionally issue a specific command to the Pentium, which would "crash" the system. The machine would have to be turned off and back on to recover from the crash.

IBM Laying Off Hundreds

In a bid to trim costs in its domestic sales and distribution operation, IBM is laying off hundreds of employees. The Associated Press says that while the cuts affect only a fraction of the North American unit's 20,000 employees, they follow offers of voluntary buyouts to many of IBM's 241,000 employees last month that could add up to thousands of more job cuts.

AP says the Armonk, New York, computer giant plans to revamp the unit by Jan. 1, adding, "The reductions come amid sluggish profits from some IBM machines. IBM is trying to cut expenses in less profitable divisions while adding staff in fast-growing areas such as computer services, which advises companies on their technology purchases and how to set up computer networks."

John W. Thompson, head of the White Plains, New York division, said in a memo to employees earlier this week, "In the past, IBM often reacted too closely to changes in the marketplace. Now, we are determined to be ahead of the curve." AP notes the cuts follow two years of acquisitions and hiring by IBM, and several prior years of downsizing which brought the number of workers down from a 406,000 peak in 1985.

"The company recently has been buoyed by stronger sales and a strategic shift toward new technologies," says the wire service. "Despite the cuts, IBM plans to have more employees at the end of this year than last as it adds about 15,000 workers to its booming services division."

Ellison Says Apple's New CEO Near

He's not saying who, but Apple Computer Inc. board member Larry Ellison says Apple has a candidate for chief executive that the board members "like very much." Reporting from Santa Clara, California, the Dow Jones news service says Ellison, who is CEO of Oracle Corp., commented during a speech to the Churchill Club that interviews with Apple candidate are continuing and he declined to identify the individual the board members "like."

Ellison also said Apple will be introducing a sub-\$1,000 network computer, adding the machine could help restore the financial health of the struggling computer maker. On the matter of Steve Jobs, Apple's interim

chief executive, Ellison said Jobs almost certainly will not take the post on a permanent basis. "I think he wants to focus on Pixar and his kids," he added. "Not surprisingly," says Dow Jones, "Ellison used his platform at the Churchill Club to chastise Microsoft Corp., saying the company has "the wrong technology" with its ever-more complex personal computer software for the age of the slimmed-down network computers." Said Ellison, "They've got technology for the present, not for the future," adding he viewed the Justice Department's recent antitrust action against Microsoft as a justified attempt to restrain its business. "If the government does nothing about what Microsoft is doing to Netscape (Communications Corp.), there is no reason to have an antitrust division at all," Ellison said.

CompuServe Revamps Messaging

CompuServe Corp. says it has created one of the most powerful and efficient communications packages in the online/Internet industry, providing a convenient, effective way to consolidate messaging options. Available at the launch of "C from CompuServe" -- the company's new Internet-based product due out in the U.S. and Canada later this year - CompuServe communications will provide universal access to electronic messages for all subscribers to CompuServe's current CSi and new "C" subscribers. In addition, it will offer special options which will unify e-mail, fax and voice messaging into a single mailbox.

The enhanced POP3 e-mail package also includes a lifetime e-mail address that users can keep even when they change Internet service providers, and allows universal access to electronic messages with standard e-mail software. Future options include prioritized inbound messages based on user specifications, priority messages by sender and subject, outbound fax capabilities and new ways to retrieve messages, such as via touch-tone phone and browser. CompuServe's Web site is located at <http://www.compuserve.com>.

AOL Passes 10 Million Users

America Online says it now has become the largest single presence in cyberspace, its membership base now passing 10 million subscribers. The Dulles, Va., firm has added more than 3 million members in the United States, Canada, Europe and Japan over the past year. "We're pleased to hit this milestone," AOL CEO Steve Case told Chris Allbritton of The Associated Press, "but this is a marathon, not a sprint." This is an ongoing effort." Case, who founded AOL in 1985 as a small computer bulletin board, added, "We don't want to sound cocky or complacent. Our focus is on meeting the needs of our 10 million members." AP quotes Case as saying the service is adding 25,000 modems a month now, bringing the number of available modems to more than 600,000. He said 520,000 members use the service during peak hours.

Satellite Phone Service to Soar

Satellite telephone service will challenge ground-based mobile phone systems in the 21st century, reports market research firm Frost & Sullivan. "The latest breakthrough is the widespread development of low earth orbiting (LEO) and medium earth orbiting (MEO) satellite networks, which promise seamless global communications anytime, anywhere," says Jose del Rosario, a telecommunications industry analyst with the company in Mountain View, California.

Satellite phone subscribers are expected to increase from 450,000 in 1999, when the market is set to launch, to over 7 million in 2004, finds Frost &

Sullivan. The company expects that substantial price declines in satellite services for both air time and handset prices will make costs comparable to cellular services by the next century. This development is expected to take market share away from cellular, PCS, paging and other wireless technologies, especially in countries with inadequate or congested terrestrial wireless networks.

"Satellites and other wireless technologies will likely co-exist for some time. However, satellite technology has an inherent advantage in its ability to provide wide area coverage for international, regional and for large in-country communications for nations such as China, India, Indonesia, Brazil and Russia, to name a few," says Megan Marek, a Frost & Sullivan telecommunications Industry Analyst. "Combine this with competitive pricing and an expectedly converging global protocol standard, and satellites may prove to be a preferred solution in the long-run." Frost & Sullivan's Web site is located at <http://www.frost.com>.

**HP, Intel, Microsoft and Sharp Propose
an IrDA Specification for Wireless Peripherals**

COMDEX Booth No. H422

IrBus Draft Specification Allows for Seamless Communication of Two-way Command and Control Products from Across-the-room. The Infrared Data Association (IrDA) today announced that Hewlett-Packard Company, Intel, Microsoft and Sharp have received draft status for their IrBus proposal that meets the IrDA bi-directional command and control market requirements.

IrBus is designed to allow in-room, wireless use of such peripherals as mouse, keyboard, joystick, gamepad, remote control units and PDAs with such hosts as multimedia PCs, two-way consumer electronic devices and two-way home appliances. Supporters of the proposed IrBus specification include Acer Laboratories, Alps Electric, HP, Intel, KeyTronic, Logitech, Matsushita Electronic Components, Microsoft, Philips Remote Control Systems and Sharp.

"As the third largest supplier in the world of IR enabled input and control devices for the consumer entertainment market, the IrBus specification will be a key enabling technology for our wireless text input, point-and-click, gaming and control devices. All of these products will become part of our daily life in the home," said Stefaan Note, product strategy and planning manager at Philips Remote Control Systems. "Besides the obvious benefits of an open specification, IrBus offers features such as multiple peripherals operating at the same time and the high bit rates that are required by a number of new products." What Can IrBus Do?

- Works with up to 8 peripherals simultaneously communicating with at least two hosts;
- Provides quick response for such real-time applications, as gaming and mouse control; Gives wide-room coverage over a typical range of 24 feet (8 meters);
- Has a long battery life;
- Has a data rate 75 Kb/s;
- Has a lower cost implementation than RF and;
- Minimal regulation of IR allows the possibility of worldwide adoption.

First IrBus host devices are expected to be multi-media PCs. IrBus has been designed to take advantage of USB technology to simplify connecting to PCs. This also will enable multiple device manufacturers to develop compatible wireless PC peripherals quickly. IrBus supporters are

prototyping IrBus to USB adapters to help finalize the specification and ready early product offerings. Other IrBus supporters are expected to incorporate IrBus support into future I/O chipsets.

Microsoft's Hardware Group, makers of PC input devices such as Natural Keyboard, IntelliMouse and SideWinder game devices, says it is committed to supporting IrBus and is evaluating how best to incorporate this specification in future products. "The IrBus specification provides a tool for developing wireless bi-directional, smart PC peripherals that will continue to make computing more compelling and convenient," said Rick Thompson, vice president, Microsoft Hardware Group, Microsoft Corp. "This wireless specification will allow input device manufacturers to develop universally accepted peripherals for consumers."

A prototype IrBus system will be demonstrated at the IrDA Pavilion (booth H422). Various IrBus peripherals will be shown operating in different interactive environments; multi-player games with gamepads, cursor control with mice and text input with keyboards. HP and Sharp are prototyping infrared transceiver modules that will meet the physical layer requirements of the developing specification. They have announced plans to produce physical layer components that are second sources to each other. This will help enable the widespread adoption of IrBus where market potential is very large.

Prototypes of these components will be shown at the respective company booths within the IrDA Pavilion (booth H422) at Comdex. These components are scheduled to be commercially available by midyear 1998. General information on IrBus can be obtained on the World Wide Web at <http://www.irbus.org>. The IrBus specification version 0.9 is a draft document and is available to IrDA members. IrDA membership is available by contacting the IrDA office at 510/943-6546 or through the World Wide Web at <http://www.irda.org>.

Slip Clutch Provides Additional Safety For Patient and Operating Room Staff

Computer Motion Inc. (Nasdaq National Market:RBOT), the world leader in medical robotics, Friday announced it has received issuance of its seventh patent from the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. The patent applies to the use of slip clutches in robotic surgical systems for use in minimally invasive surgical procedures. U.S. Patent No. 5,657,429 applies to the use of slip clutches in robotic systems which move a surgical instrument in response to a surgeon's input.

These robotic systems have an end effector that is adapted to hold a surgical instrument such as an endoscope. The end effector is coupled to a robotic arm which can move the endoscope relative to a patient. Slip clutches are utilized at various joints in the robotic arm to help ensure the safe operation of the robot and also to allow the robotic arm to be manually positioned by the surgeon. "We are pleased with this patent because our approach to using slip clutches is critical in building a surgical robot that is safe for the patient and operating room staff," said Dr. Yulun Wang, executive vice president, chief technical officer and founder of Computer Motion. "We will continue to secure core intellectual property to sustain a competitive advantage and maintain our leadership position in medical robotics."

Computer Motion, the world leader in medical robotics, develops, manufactures and markets proprietary robotic and computerized surgical systems for the operating room. The company's mission is to enhance

surgeons' capabilities, improve outcomes and reduce costs using computers and robotics. The company currently markets the Automated Endoscopic System for Optimal Positioning (AESOP), a surgical robot capable of positioning an endoscope in response to a surgeon's verbal commands. The company is also developing the ZEUS robotic surgical system for new minimally invasive microsurgery procedures, such as endoscopic coronary artery bypass grafting (E-CABG) and the HERMES Operating System for the voice control of medical devices in the operating room.

Australian Whiz Kid Signs Deal

Australia's national telephone company, Telstra, has signed a deal with a 17-year-old computing star Alex Hartman for the rights to his new software, InfiNET, which allows access to the Internet with one click of a button. "I think this will do the same thing for the Internet as the remote control did for TV," Hartman yesterday told The Sydney Morning Herald. The Associated Press notes about a third of Australian households have personal computers, but most people use them mainly to play games, followed by uses for business and homework. Only a small percentage access the Internet, which Telstra is actively trying to promote.

"Apparently," says the wire service, "many people are deterred from using the Internet by the complicated process of logging on, punching security codes, waiting for connections to be established, and other delays. Hartman's program does away with most of the delays." Judy Slatyer, Telstra's general manager of cable services, told reporters she had combed the world seeking improved Internet access programs, but finally found what she was seeking in her own backyard, in the Sydney suburb of Mosman.

"Our initial reaction to Alex," she says, "is that this looks great and this kid is going to go a long way." The Morning Herald described the sale as a "million-dollar" deal, but there were no precise figures on its value. AP says Hartman has had his own software development company, Amicus, since he was 15.

Enhanced Snappy Debuts

Play Inc. has unveiled the latest version of its popular PC-based image capture device. Like its predecessor, Snappy 3.0 captures high-resolution images from video sources, including TVs, VCRs and camcorders, and transfers them into Windows-based PCs.

Snappy 3.0 includes a new color preview screen and faster screen updates. The product also includes a "one-click" e-mail feature that allows users to e-mail images from inside the Snappy software. Snappy 3.0 is set to become available this month for \$99.95.

Play also says it plans to release Snappy 3.0 Deluxe. The product, due out by late November, includes the ability to capture moving video clips and stereo audio with video stills, a universal audio cable and three software packages: "Adobe PhotoDeluxe," "Kai's Power Goo SE" and "Gryphon Morph." No price has been announced. To learn more, visit Play's Web site at <http://www.play.com>.

Microsoft 'Hydra' Beta Ships

Microsoft Corp. has released the first beta version of Windows-Based Terminal Server. The product, formerly code-named "Hydra," is designed to deliver the Windows experience -- including Windows applications -- to computer terminals that can't run Windows. Microsoft says Beta 1 will ship

this week to more than 1,000 testers for technical evaluation. The software giant also reports that it has gained the support of several major terminal vendors, including Boundless Technologies Inc., Network Computing Devices Inc., Neoware Systems Inc. (formerly HDS Network Systems Inc.), Tektronix Inc. and Wyse Technology Inc.

"Customers have told us they want a Windows-based terminal solution to complement traditional Windows-based PCs," says Jim Allchin, senior vice president of Microsoft's personal and business systems group. "With Hydra, we have extended the 32-bit Windows development environment from Windows NT Server to the terminal applications market. Hydra also is a great way to easily provide line-of-business solutions on full PC clients." Microsoft says it will determine a date for Beta 2 based upon customer feedback from Beta 1. Pricing, packaging and licensing for Windows-Based Terminal Server haven't yet been determined, says the company. Additional information can be found at <http://www.microsoft.com/ntserver/guide/hydra.asp>.

'Office 97' Sells at Record Pace

Microsoft Corp. reports that its "Microsoft Office 97" software suite is the fastest-selling business application in PC history. In less than a year, says Microsoft, "Office 97" has sold more than 20 million licenses at an average rate of 60,000 per day. The software giant notes that "Office 97" licenses are selling at twice the rate of any previous version of "Office." "With record-level sales, 'Office 97' has reached a new milestone in PC history," says Steve Ballmer, Microsoft's executive vice president of sales and support. "Corporate customers of all sizes and industries are driving the high demand for 'Office 97.' We credit this success to the great feedback we've received from our customers." For more "Office 97" information, visit Microsoft's corporate desktop evaluation Web site at <http://www.microsoft.com/office/org/>.

Handheld Computer Market Soars

Market researcher Dataquest Inc. reports that the worldwide handheld computer market experienced strong growth during the first half of 1997, with shipments reaching 1.4 million units, nearly equaling 1996's year-end total of 1.6 million shipments. Dataquest notes that the market's growth was led by "standard" handheld computers, which accounted 842,000 units. The standard handheld market was driven by the success of 3Com's PalmPilot, which maintained 66 percent market share for the first half of 1997, says the San Jose, California, company. Windows CE-based handheld PCs garnered 20 percent of the standard handheld market in the first half of 1997.

Expandable organizer shipments accounted for 39 percent of the worldwide handheld shipments in the first half of 1997. The expandable organizer market has declined as the standard handheld market continues to grow, notes Dataquest. At the end of 1996, the expandable organizers comprised 51 percent of the overall handheld market while the standard handheld computers controlled 49 percent of the market.

"(Standard and Windows CE-based models) deliver very different application sets, have different form factors and data input technologies, yet the inevitable comparisons between the PalmPilot and the crop of Windows CE-based handheld PCs came and went in the first half of 1997," says Mike McGuire, a Dataquest senior industry analyst. "We believe the choice really comes down to users' work patterns -- mobile or deskbound -- and their primary computer, desktop or notebook/ultraportable." Visit Dataquest on the Web at <http://www.dataquest.com>.

Monitor Magnifier Introduced

Bausch & Lomb Inc. has introduced a screen magnification system that's designed to help PC users see more information more clearly. The Bausch & Lomb PC Magni-Viewer magnifies on-screen information 175 percent. The \$250 product, which is set to ship in February, offers multiple adjustments for customized monitor viewing and allows PC users to automatically position themselves in an ergonomically correct work posture.

The Rochester, New York, company says the PC Magni-Viewer should appeal to writers who want to fit more words on a screen page, accountants who want to add more columns to a spreadsheet, designers working with CAD/CAM programs and engineers who want to enlarge schematics. The PC Magni-Viewer also aims to help aging Baby Boomers who require bi-focals to see and read at a closer distance.

The two-piece system provides a rotating base that sits underneath a 13-, 15- or 17-inch PC monitor. Other features include an adjustable swivel-arm that extends over the top of the monitor and an adjustable acrylic optical lens. "The Bausch & Lomb PC Magni-Viewer represents a major step forward in personal computer ergonomics," says James A. Goff, vice president and general manager of Bausch & Lomb's vision accessories group. "It is an optical solution that compensates for the optical illusion of computer monitor technology. Monitors present the illusion that on-screen information is completely still with defined edges -- like text on a printed page -- when it is in fact a screen filled with moving dots of light called pixels. This illusion tricks the eye and forces it to strain to maintain a focus on a constantly moving target." More details are available on the Web at <http://www.bauschvision.com>.

IBM Unveils Flat Panel Monitors

IBM Corp. has introduced five new flat panel color monitors, designed for use with desktop PC and workstations. The active-matrix, thin film transistor (TFT) products are available in 14.5 and 16.1 inches screen sizes and with a black or white case. They offer resolutions of up to 1,280 by 1,024 dots with as many as 16.7 colors. Two multimode monitors provide a range of settings that match various PC graphics drivers; three autosyncing models will automatically adjust into whatever mode is sent from the computer's graphics subsystem.

"Sales of flat panel monitors, which have been limited to select, space-constricted environments in the past, are expected to move into more mainstream markets in 1998," says Rhoda Alexander, senior analyst with Stanford Resources Inc., a market research firm. "Street prices on these displays have dropped dramatically in the past year and early indicators point towards 1998 as a spectacular growth year in LCD monitor sales."

Compared to conventional cathode ray tube (CRT) monitors, flat panel monitors consume about two thirds less power, generate very little heat, are smaller and weigh less. The new monitors' prices range from \$2,795 to \$4,595. IBM has also lowered the price of its current gray-cased multimode 16.1-inch flat panel monitor to \$3,995. More details are available on the Web at <http://www.us.pc.ibm.com/options>

Pulitzers Now Look Online

Online journalism for the first time can be included in the entries of newspapers seeking the Pulitzer Prize for public service. Newspapers seeking the 1999 prize based on work published in 1998 will be allowed to

submit a single CD-ROM whose content was staff-produced and made available on the paper's World Wide Web site, Pulitzer Prize administrator Seymour Topping has told Associated Press writer Tim Whitmire.

"If a paper has a story of some importance and it decides to elaborate on or illustrate the story further, or make some arrangement for interactive responses of readers to that story" through the paper's Web site, that material could be included on the CD-ROM, Topping said. He told AP that including online journalism is particularly appropriate to the public service prize, which is designed to reward papers that make full use of all journalistic resources in presenting a story.

Geneva Overholser, chairman of this year's Pulitzer board and ombudsman at The Washington Post, commented, "It's not as dramatic, I am sure, as some who would advocate recognition of online journalism would hope for, but I think all of us on the board think that it's significant. We do this in recognition that online journalism is an important part of what newspapers do."

Topping told AP the board was inspired to examine the issue after receiving two entries for this year's public service award that included CD-ROMS with material that had been posted on newspapers' Web sites. One was an Internet presentation about Bosnia, titled "Uncertain Paths to Peace," submitted by The New York Times; the other was from the Sun Herald of Charlotte Harbor, Florida, for its online presentation of "Our Town: Charlotte." Both entries had to be disqualified, Topping said, because online journalism was not included in the entry requirements. Says Topping, "In both cases, particularly with the case of The New York Times, it was obvious that the entries were made to put the whole issue on the table."

Pfeiffer Urges PC in Every Room

Compaq Computer Corp. President/CEO Eckhard Pfeiffer says a personal computer in every room and in every vehicle should be the new goal of the computer industry. Speaking at the Comdex trade show in Las Vegas about the future digital home, Pfeiffer said, "The digital home will create for consumers an array of devices all genetically related to the PC." He described the future digital home with a computer server in the basement running a network of myriad computers and devices in every room ranging from a PC Theatre to a device that looks like a cellular phone for electronic mail.

Added the Comdex chief, "There will be a general-purpose PC in the study, and some will sell for less than \$500. We are going to see innovations like we have never seen before." However, he didn't give a specific time frame for his predictions. Currently, fewer than 40 percent of homes in North America have PCs. Later, speaking with Therese Poletti of the Reuter News Service, Pfeiffer added, "I think every deduction in the buy price gets another slice of the population into the store. It's a matter of price elasticity in the end."

Reuters says Pfeiffer and other Compaq executives demonstrated the company's PC Theatre system, which combines a PC and a TV in a product aimed for the living room, developed with consumer electronics giant Thomson SA and its RCA brand. The wire service says the product is in customer testing and an upgraded model now includes a DVD player to play full-motion video. A Compaq executive sat comfortably in a living room armchair on the stage, with a remote control, illustrating how the PC Theatre jumps from TV programming to movies to the Internet to PC applications.

Also at the trade show, IBM is wowing attenders at its booth with a car that lets drivers surf the Internet, catch up on e-mail, get navigation help and drive at the same time. Reuters says the vehicle is the result of a joint effort of IBM, Delco Electronics, Netscape Communications Corp. and Sun Microsystems Inc., who formed an initiative to create the "Network Vehicle."

The car, says Reuters, "is a working concept that employs technologies already in use, such as IBM's voice recognition software, so that the user can verbally request the computer to read aloud e-mail messages, locate a restaurant or hotel, in a safe manner that does not interfere with driving." Most of the technology could be made available to consumers in as little as 18 months as add-on's to their existing vehicles, IBM says.

"Early versions of Network Vehicles could be available in as little as four years or less, depending on the development cycles of new car models," Reuters reports. "Daimler-Benz demonstrated a Mercedes wired for Internet access at the Tokyo Auto show last month."

Eye Drops Aimed at Computer Users

Bausch & Lomb has introduced a new eye drops product designed especially for computer users. Bausch & Lomb says its Bausch & Lomb Computer Eye Drops is an over-the-counter lubricant that works by restoring moisture to eyes that can become irritated after working on a computer for more than two hours per day. The company reports that the eye drops have been shown to "effectively relieve dry, tired and strained eyes."

"We have estimated that Americans spend more than \$1 billion in medical costs attributed to computer-related eye problems," says Dr. Ellen Strahlman, Bausch & Lomb's vice president for corporate medical and scientific affairs. "With Bausch and Lomb Computer Eye Drops, this group of consumers finally has an eye drop formulated specifically for them, to restore the moisture in their dry, strained and tired eyes -- rather than only alleviating the redness. This product should be a welcome relief to hundreds of thousands of computer users." More details are available on the Bausch & Lomb Web site at <http://www.bausch.com>.

Pittsburgh Bond Makes Net History

Pittsburgh has just made Internet history, becoming the first city to sell municipal bonds online. Associated Press writer Geof Becker says applause greeted the end of yesterday's half-hour of bidding when a computer locked in winning bids for the \$70 million in bonds. This also was the first time in a live auction that allowed bidders to top each other. Cities traditionally sell bonds by accepting sealed bids from brokers or negotiating interest rates with them. Finance director Paul Hennigan told AP that method would have cost the city about 5.3 percent to borrow money, but the bonds sold on the Internet had an average interest rate of 5.17 percent, as competing buyers bid the rate lower.

Hennigan estimated that the city saved about \$300,000 in interest and commissions. The savings will go to more public projects. Still, says Becker, using the Internet to auction bonds makes brokerage houses uneasy. "They worry," he says, "at being placed in the awkward position of bidding against potential customers who theoretically could buy directly from the city or agency that issues the bonds." AP says Pittsburgh officials "bowed to such concerns, making the sale off limits to insurance companies and other institutional customers who normally buy bonds for mutual funds or

pension investments. Only brokers were allowed to bid."

Incidentally, Belle Haven Investments, a municipal bond brokerage firm based in Greenwich, Conn., was the winning bidder for several issues. The Internet bidding didn't go by without complaints, though. For instance, Curtis Roach, a principal at the firm, told the wire service he didn't like seeing his price posted on the auction web site because customers may feel emboldened to bargain harder, knowing what he paid. Said Roach, "It may be a bit too much disclosure ... (but) I'm not sure it's necessarily bad. It's not what we're accustomed to."

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COMDEX FALL '97

Highlights from 'Vegas

Samsung Shows Prototype Web Video Phone

LAS VEGAS -- Samsung Electronics America showed a prototype of its Web Video phone at Comdex/Fall. The company expects to ship late next year. The Web phone looks like a regular phone but has a 5-inch LCD panel that juts out at a 45-degree angle, and a small keyboard for composing e-mail. The phone works like a regular phone and allows direct Internet access and processes e-mail. The telephone's standard features include a speakerphone, caller ID, an answering machine, call waiting, and several personal information management functions. The Web phone connects through a standard telephone line and complies with the H.323 Internet Telephony Technology standard, a company spokesperson said. Pricing for the device has not been set.

Borland Buys Visigenic In Stock Swap

Borland said Tuesday it will take a charge in the first quarter of 1998 for its acquisition of Visigenic Software, a move designed to give Borland a foothold in the enterprise market. Scotts Valley, Calif.-based Borland said it will issue 12.5 million shares of common stock to pay for the deal, and see a charge between \$10 million and \$12 million, or 22 cents per share. Visigenic shareholders will receive .81988 of a share of Borland stock for each outstanding share of Visigenic. The deal will be accounted for as a pooling of interests. Shares of Borland [BORL] closed down 1 5/8 to 10 3/8, and Visigenic [VSGN] jumped 2 1/2 to 7 3/4.

Borland, which announced the deal at Comdex/Fall, said the deal will help it become the a key technology provider for the enterprise market. Visigenic, in San Mateo, Calif., is a leading provider of CORBA distributed object technology. "Our acquisition of Visigenic represents the next step in our ongoing turnaround initiative," said Del Yocam, Borland CEO, in a statement. "We now embark on the next major phase of our turnaround." Yocam said the merger would not be dilutive to Borland's earnings. Once the deal is completed, Visigenic founder and CEO Roger Sippl will become Borland's chief technology officer. Rick LeFaivre, Borland's current chief technology officer, will head research and development for the combined company.

Smart Cards? So What?

LAS VEGAS -- They may be smart, but they are not very popular. That's the verdict on smart cards from an informal poll among attendees at Comdex/Fall held in Las Vegas. Many companies are betting on the idea that Web surfers would use these debit-type cards for applications such as making micropayments on the Internet -- paying a few cents at a time to read an article, download a recipe, or look at a picture online. Users download a finite amount of cash onto a card, then swipe it through a reader on the side of a computer. Besides convenience, proponents see a big plus for security. Hackers would not be able to use the cards to steal credit card numbers or access bank accounts.

However, when TechWeb reporters asked people on the show floor at Comdex whether they would use smart cards for Internet transactions, most did not see the point. "A credit card would do just as well," said Michael Camplin of Eastman-Kodak. He said he is "not worried" about using a credit card online. Others agreed smart cards were not particularly needed for electronic commerce. "Credit card protection loss is pretty good," said Niloy Shah of Amoco. "There's more risk on a smart card -- if you lose your card, you lose your money."

"Once everyone agrees on [security] standards for e-commerce," said Richard Zamora, "the security problems [with credit cards] will go away." A few attendees at least thought the idea was interesting. Kimberly Fox of REC said such cards might simplify her life. However, she has never had a chance to actually use one. "If anyone loses their credit card online, they can be mischarged or overcharged," said Elkharsashy Rasha of American Express Travel in Egypt. "Of course I would use it. It's very risky to use a credit card on the Internet."

Cisco CEO Sees Bright Future

LAS VEGAS -- Cisco CEO John Chambers said Tuesday electronic commerce will top \$1 trillion by 2001.

Chambers, giving the keynote speech at Comdex/Fall, said e-commerce was accelerating and should easily outpace projections of \$300 million by 2001. The networking giant alone estimates sales of \$15 billion to \$30 billion by 2001, said Chambers. "I think this is going to happen at a much faster pace if we stay on our growth curve," he said. Chambers, who was heckled at the beginning of his speech by a labor representative, said companies both large and small face a stark choice: adopt Internet technologies or die. "The companies who deploy these technologies will win," he said. "Those who don't will be left behind." Business-to-business sales will drive e-commerce and companies that take advantage of their networks will thrive, said Chambers, who was stumping for Cisco products. Cisco conducts 39 percent of its business via the Internet. The company, based in San Jose, Calif., has grown from annual revenue of \$70 million in 1991 to \$6.4

billion in 1997 making it the largest networking company. Chambers was mum on market share or projections for the next quarter.

LCD Monitor Cost may Drop by Next Autumn

LAS VEGAS -- LCD monitors are not quite ready to hit the retail mainstream, but they're getting closer, breaching the \$2,000 price barrier and showing up more frequently in stores. Panasonic, ViewSonic, Samsung, and ADI Systems are among the vendors exhibiting flat-panel LCD displays at this week's Comdex/Fall show in Las Vegas, in part to position LCD monitors for next fall, when prices are expected to drop to about \$1,500.

"We are just starting to get around the curve, and LCD is beginning to become a viable retail product," said Michael Marusic, Panasonic's marketing manager for display monitors. Despite such positioning by its competitors, Sony is holding off and concentrating its efforts on CRT products. "We're not going to show something just for the sake of showing it," said Sean O'Brien, Sony's product marketing manager for displays.

Meanwhile, retail store managers said as LCD monitor prices drop, the customer base has spread to include those outside the financial and medical fields, to whom most LCD sales have been made to date. The placement of LCD units in technologically sophisticated retailers, such as New York's RCS Computer Experience -- and in the nation's largest computer retailer, CompUSA (in most major cities and on the CompUSA Direct online catalog) -- is considered by ViewSonic as being a key strategic achievement because their customers are most likely to make such a purchase, said Chris Franey, ViewSonic's vice president of sales. ViewSonic, Samsung, and other manufacturers are making efforts to give LCD monitors more of a consumer-friendly feel. "We're taking big steps now. The product we are putting out now is equipped with multimedia speakers, making it more retail-oriented, and we are looking to sell to the SoHo and corporate market," said Jeff Geis, Samsung's marketing manager for displays.

Smart Cards? Not too Soon

LAS VEGAS -- Smart cards are being test-marketed for consumers to use at retail outlets, but hardware vendors say PC-based electronic commerce is still years from adoption. According to the manufacturers of PC smart card readers at Comdex/Fall, security -- not Internet shopping -- will be the primary use of the credit card-sized devices in computers. Although the companies surveyed are targeting different niches, they all agreed that it will be 1999 or 2000 before electronic cash and the Web converge.

Smart card reader manufacturer SCM Microsystems, based in Los Gatos, Calif., has been working with the U.S. Department of Defense to provide secure desktops, and is focusing on network access and encryption. Aaron Zitzer, SCM product marketing manager, said the ability to track individuals across a network while allowing their identity and configuration preferences to travel with them will spread the use of PC-based smart cards. Smart cards provide the necessary security to let customers search corporate databases and facilitate business to business transactions, Zitzer said.

Because of the lack of software standards for smart cards, SCM has customized the firmware for use in its readers to communicate with several Windows and Unix platforms. Microsoft's recent PC-Smart Card standardization in Windows 98 and NT 5.0 will alleviate some of these problems, Zitzer said, but widespread smart card usage requires a killer application. It will take a Microsoft to create a suite of smart card-enabled applications to generate the necessary demand, he said.

Tritheim Technologies, based in Tarpon Springs, Fla., is showing off SmartPort LT developer kits that let integrators develop intranet and Internet products focusing on business-to-business applications. Tritheim offers PC Card and serial or parallel port desktop readers along with its \$495 kits for Win NT and 95, and is developing Win CE and 3.1 applications. Tritheim is working with developer Extencia, based in Redmond, Wash., to develop smart card-protected access to Websites, said Vincent Poole, vice president of product development. Banks will eventually bring smart cards to the masses and may even give away the readers to key customers, Poole said.

Hewlett-Packard, based in Palo Alto, Calif., is shipping two Praesidium/Imagine Card Unix-based products that include the smart cards, readers, and hardware and software for smart card creation and administration. A corporate version provides on-the-fly encryption for any application within an organization, such as a form-based acquisition system. The Internet product focuses on server-based authentication for allowing external access to Web pages, but does not provide encryption. HP officials said they have not seen enough demand to add a commerce component to their smart card products. They added that they are selling many evaluation kits to banks who "are kicking the tires," but are not looking to extend the technology to consumers imminently.

Comdex has Latest Net Tools

LAS VEGAS -- Comdex/Fall is the industry's opportunity to catch up with products that promise to help make life a little easier. The Web has found its way into nearly everything from databases to graphics applications to sound-editing software. Here are some examples of the next wave of Web products:

Claris is back with new Web-savvy versions of FileMaker Pro and HomePage. FileMaker Pro 4.0 enables dynamic database publishing to the Web with a single click. Comdex attendees were guided through a hands-on session that showed off the new Web server component and sample Web templates for shopping cart, guestbook, and employee applications. The next release of Claris' Web page authoring tool, HomePage 3.0, was also being shown with enhanced FileMaker support. FileMaker Pro 4.0 is shipping at \$199. HomePage 3.0 is expected in early 1998 at \$99. Both products are available for Windows and Macintosh platforms.

CorelDraw 8 is a flexible graphics design package sporting useful features such as color mixing, integrated 3-D modeling and rendering, and interactive distortion. A preset tool bar environment exposing Internet layout tools merely scratches the surface. Web page elements, such as Java applets, radio buttons, and embedded files, can be placed on the same page as content created with standard CorelDraw illustration tools. The resulting page can be exported to one of three HTML formats -- Standard HTML, Netscape 4 Layers, and IE 4 Styles -- retaining the look and feel of the original document.

The \$249 upgrade takes the edge off the full \$695 list price. Mac and NT/Alpha versions of CorelDraw 8 are under development. If you are looking to build and render 3-D models or thinking about toying with VRML, Ray Dream 3D from MetaCreations is a great buy at \$99. More than 750 3-D models and 400 shaders are included. If you are interested in using audio, the folks at Sonic Foundry offer a pair of professional-grade digital audio products -- Sound Forge 4.0 and Sound Forge XP 4.0. Sound Forge XP can be used to record, edit, and manipulate many digital audio formats including

AU, WAV, AIFF, and RealAudio RA.

The full version of Sound Forge offers better control, a wider range of effects, and DirectX plug-in support. Sound Forge XP comes with an affordable \$149 price tag, while its big brother Sound Forge 4.0 weighs in at \$495. Both products include a build specifically made for the Alpha microprocessor under Win NT. Most Web developers should find XP more than suitable.

Alpha 21164PC-Based Systems RSN

LAS VEGAS -- Fourteen computer-system manufacturers announced new PCs based on Digital Semiconductor's Alpha 21164PC microprocessor at Comdex/Fall Monday. These new systems, available in the sub-\$2,600 price category, will contain the Alpha 21164PC chip and Alpha PC164SX motherboard, which were introduced last spring. The companies introducing Alpha 21164PC systems: AHCS International, A-Trend Technology, Alta Technology, Aspen Systems, Carrera Computers, DCG Computers, Enorex Microsystems, MaxVision, Microway, Multiwave Technology, Polywell Computer, Tri-Star Computer, Visual Technology, and Vobis Microcomputer.

The Alpha 21164PC microprocessor was co-designed by Digital Semiconductor and Tokyo-based Mitsubishi Electric. Hudson, Mass.-based Digital Semiconductor is part of Digital Equipment. The chip, which is marketed and sold by Digital Semiconductor, Mitsubishi, and Samsung Electronics, runs at speeds of 400 MHz, 466 MHz, and 533 MHz. According to Digital Semiconductor, the Alpha microprocessors enable real-time, broadcast-quality video playback. They can be used in applications such as creating and rendering 3-D images, Web-content creation, multimedia authoring, and videoconferencing, as well as architectural engineering and electronic and mechanical computer-aided design.

The Alpha 21164PC is the first Alpha processor to utilize motion video instruction (MVI) extensions, Digital Semiconductor said. The MVI instructions accelerate the performance of video-data compression algorithms that implement MPEG-1 and MPEG-2 video and prevailing videoconferencing standards, according to the company. MVI will be included in all future Alpha microprocessors.

3Com Shoots for Marketshare

LAS VEGAS -- 3Com, a name long associated with network interface cards, stackable devices, and other products that fit near the edge of the network, has taken another major move toward the core of the network -- an area historically dominated by rival Cisco Systems. The Santa Clara, Calif.-based networking vendor is using Comdex to roll out a high-end switch for both ATM and Gigabit Ethernet, with support for Layer 3 switching, Fast IP, Multiprotocol over ATM cut-through routing features, multicast/broadcast control, and Quality of Service/Class of Service capabilities for mission-critical or low-latency applications, such as voice and video.

"The CoreBuilder 9000 offers the highest level of aggregation in 3Com's product line," said Clinton Ramsey, 3Com LAN systems director. "It's a very effective and feature-rich follow-up to the CoreBuilder 3500 [Layer 3 switch]." Forwarding rates, according to 3Com, have been measured in excess of 100 million packets per second, with Layer 3 switching capabilities running at 56 million packets per second, as a result of the company's Flexible Intelligent Routing Engine ASIC technology. The box supports as many as 112 ATM OC-12 (622 megabits per second) ports with

future scalability to OC-48 (2.488 gigabits per second). Maximum Gigabit Ethernet port density, meanwhile, currently stands at 126.

Pricing for the ATM chassis starts at \$41,000. A dual-port ATM module costs \$10,000. Both products are slated for April availability. The Gigabit Ethernet version, anticipated in June, starts at \$35,000; the dual-port module will be priced at \$4,000. Both interfaces, however, can be mixed and matched in the same chassis. "They [3Com] really need a solid core product, and they seem to be accomplishing that by bringing together the technologies they've gotten through some of their acquisitions," said John McConnell, president of McConnell Consulting, in Boulder, Colo. "This seems to be a really strong product that, over time, should really offer some very substantial investment protection."

McConnell anticipates that the 9000 could give viable competition to Cisco at the core, adding that Cisco's Gigabit Switch Router has only recently begun to ship. "If 3Com can really execute and get the product to market when they claim, with the features they describe, this should be a very credible offering," McConnell said. "Having traction at the edge of the network is also going to give them some advantages as they move toward the core. Some of the stuff they're doing with [network interface cards] is really going to be increasingly leveraged by the core switches. So if you've already got their NICs, you're using dRMON, [distributed RMON] and service-level stuff, it can be pretty strong leverage for their core switch. Clearly, Cisco is going to have more aggressive products in that space also. They're not going to take that kind of a competitive move lightly."

Channel participation seems likely to be focused primarily upon high-end integrators. "3Com usually sells a great deal of products through the channel, but this type of box usually goes from the top down, through the direct-sales force to large integrators," said Dave Passmore, president of Decisys, a Sterling, Va.-based network consultancy.

But McConnell suggested that 3Com's move toward the core might pull more than a few channel players along with it. "I would think the resellers would want to be pulled along toward the core," McConnell said. "It certainly would open up some opportunities. Obviously, the stuff at the core is going to be lower-quantity, higher-margin products. Some of them, on the other hand, are likely to consider how much they want to [challenge] Cisco, or whether they want to deal with having a lot of competing products in their lines."

AMD Shows Low-Priced PC/TV

LAS VEGAS -- AMD is offering a PC/TV at well below the \$3,000 to \$5,000 price point for the existing PC Theater systems based on rival Intel's chips. The company teamed with start-up 4Tel, in Capitola, Calif., to design a new system that contains all the basics of a PC and adds TV and DVD functionality. Two models are available: A low-profile desktop-size box that works with a flat-screen 29-inch monitor and an all-in-one unit with a 17-inch screen. Suggested retail prices for the models are \$1,299 for the desktop box (plus \$999 for the 29-inch multimedia monitor) and \$1,399 for the 17-inch all-in-one unit.

Both systems, which don't have official names yet, contain two internal TV tuner cards, so consumers can play back two video streams simultaneously or display multiple videoconferencing streams. Also included are a DVD-drive (for DVD-ROM, CD-ROM, and DVD movie playback), a 3-D graphics card, and a wireless keyboard and mouse. Each PC/TV uses an AMD 200-MHz K6 processor

and comes with 32 megabytes of RAM, a 3G hard drive, and Windows 95. In addition to a lower price, the units contain a different television tuner implementation as a way to differentiate themselves from major players such as Compaq and Gateway.

The 4Tel systems contain an upgradable TV tuner box attached the back of the monitor. Having a tuner box connected to the back of the television means consumers can watch television without ever having to turn on the PC, and "it provides an upgrade path," said Mike Boyd, chief technology officer at 4Tel. The tuner box on the monitor was designed to be removable, so the consumer can get a new tuner card when digital television options become available.

4Tel systems, which started about one year ago, is being headed up by Bill Manac, who is also chief executive officer at Quadstate Software, a software compression company in Capitola. The design group is made up of the former Net TV team, Boyd said. The company is contracting with a division of Umax to manufacture the systems, said Michael Stark, vice president of product development. 4Tel said it is in the process of briefing retailers and will also make systems available to consumers directly from its Website at www.4tel.com.

Compaq CEO Offers Vision For PC Market

LAS VEGAS -- Chief executive Eckhard Pfeiffer laid out a host of predictions for the industry Monday and displayed his vision of a ubiquitous PC. Pfeiffer, who gave the opening keynote at Comdex/Fall, said PC market share was consolidating among the four top vendors. He said 18 months ago, the top four vendors owned 24 percent of the market and now has 35 percent. And the trend is accelerating. "I expect this to continue -- five years from now, the top four players will control the top 70 percent of the PC market," he said. According to Dataquest's third quarter market share figures, the top four global PC vendors were Compaq, IBM, Dell and Hewlett-Packard.

Compaq leads in market share both abroad and domestically. Pfeiffer said he expected Houston-based Compaq to have revenue of \$24 billion to \$25 billion this year. The Compaq CEO added that PCs were making the mainframe extinct. He specifically cited Windows NT and Intel's Merced chip as the primary reason for that trend. In a demonstration, Pfeiffer also gave an indicator of where Compaq may be heading in the next year or so. Pfeiffer ran through a demo of what he called the PC Theatre -- an effort to replace the television with a PC.

The product, which would battle Microsoft's WebTV for living room eyeballs, is a set-top box that is a PC with a remote control and wireless keyboard. The PC Theatre, produced in a joint venture with RCA, would be a full-fledged PC that would be able to pick up television. Pfeiffer did basic Web surfing while running a video in his demonstration. The product is an effort to put PC's everywhere, said Pfeiffer, who envisions all living rooms eventually being tapped into a computer. The PC Theatre is being test marketed, and Pfeiffer would not say when it would hit the markets. The main hurdle is price. The PC Theatre, as it is configured now, would cost \$5,000, Pfeiffer said.

At Comdex. Thin Is In

Vendors at this week's Comdex plan to match the heaps of cheap eats at Las Vegas' buffets by offering demos of a wide variety of inexpensive, thin hardware clients as alternatives to PCs. Systems vendors such as IBM and

traditional dumb-terminal makers such as Network Computing Devices (NCD), Tektronix, and Wyse Technology will display a wide range of devices, including network computers; plain vanilla Windows-based terminals; wireless WBTs; and flat-panel, small-footprint, low-emissions WBTs. The goal is to augment the general-purpose, relatively inexpensive PC with specialized, less expensive accessories for every computing occasion. Toward that end, last week, a dozen hardware and software vendors announced they will meet in January to set standards for managing NCs across multivendor platforms. But attendees at the show will find ample evidence that vendors are not holding up product plans waiting to see what these standards efforts will yield.

Wyse is arguably showing the broadest range of thin clients. Wyse will demonstrate a WBT that integrates an LCD panel with computing logic for a thin client that's not just thin in terms of weight and software requirements -- it's physically very thin as well, said Jeff McNaught, senior director and general manager at Wyse, based in Hsinchu, Taiwan. The company also will demonstrate a wireless handheld WBT with an LCD screen and a stylus that can be used as a mouse or to tap out letters on an on-screen virtual keyboard. The two units will go into production in the first quarter of 1998, priced in the low-\$2,000 range for the flat-panel device, and about \$2,500 for the wireless device.

Wyse will display a new WBT designed for the low end, priced starting at \$550 for just the logic unit, to be available by the end of the year. IBM also will display the latest in its series of NCs, the Network Station Series 1000, designed to run Java applications and priced competitively against a low-end PC. The product will be available in the fourth quarter. The 1000 is a follow-up to the already available model 100, which is little more than a dumb terminal with 3270 and 5250 terminal emulation and X-Windows display built in. The model 300 has the same functionality as the 100, but also includes an embedded Web browser. The model 100 costs \$649; the model 300 costs \$799. The model 1000 will have the same functionality as the model 300, plus support for the latest Java virtual machine.

Gigabyte Storage And Handheld Devices At Comdex

LAS VEGAS -- In the world's glitz capital, users sift through the neon to find substance at Comdex/Fall. "It's not a big show for us," said Mark Bingham, a Sun Microsystems spokesman. "It's too hard to make a lot of noise there." But that won't stop vendors big and small from trying. James Staten, an industry analyst with San Jose, Calif.-based Dataquest, said he is looking forward to four major highlights of this year's show. One of the most prominent will be the newest generation of removable data storage systems, he said. Several of the new products will give users up to a gigabyte of storage for roughly the same price as today's market leader, the Iomega 100-megabyte Zip drive.

A key attraction of the show for corporate managers will be a hands-on look at Windows 98 and new versions of Win NT and Win CE, Staten said. The upgrade to CE, Microsoft's mini-operating system, should give a boost to systems smaller than laptops. "At this show, we're really going to start to see handhelds that compete with notebooks," Staten said. These devices will run stripped-down versions of most familiar office programs and will increasingly threaten traditional laptops, he said. Microsoft will also show the next release of its e-mail and messaging software, Microsoft Exchange 5.5. The show will feature "a lot of new device types, products that don't fit the current mold," Staten said. Many of these are targeted at home use, such as products that allow users to link their desktop computers and their living room television sets, so they can surf the Net

in either place.

Staten said he hadn't expected that technology to reach the mainstream for several more years, but it is likely to gain momentum at this year's show. >From disk drive to four-wheel drive, Comdex has a little bit of everything. Intel is featuring its Bunnymobile -- the high-tech van driven by the men in the shiny bunny suits. The van is said to be equipped with Internet technology that lets the driver send faxes, surf the Web, or place telephone calls from the driver's seat. The car will reportedly give a directionally impaired driver voice instructions as well. Rivaling Intel will be a Java car, co-developed by Sun and JavaSoft. The car's inner computers all run on Java, of course. The Web-equipped car reportedly lets a driver give voice commands, watch television, or listen to Internet radio.

Wideband DRAM

LAS VEGAS -- Samsung Semiconductor at Comdex here this week will unveil what it claims is the first 64-megabit double data rate synchronous DRAM chip. In a Comdex battle of next-generation wideband memory chips, LG Semicon plans to show a 64-Mb Rambus DRAM and announce that it will make samples available of Direct Rambus DRAMs in the first half of 1998. Recently, Hyundai Electronics and Mitsubishi announced test chips for a third high-speed DRAM contender: SDRAM. Intel has selected Direct Rambus DRAM as the wideband memory for its upcoming 600-MHz and higher microprocessors. However, the rival architectures are out to convince the computer industry -- at Comdex -- that the wideband DRAM battle isn't over just yet.

PC Makers Struggle With Platform Expansion

LAS VEGAS -- There are portentous questions in the air as Comdex/Fall opens its doors here next week. Just how far can the PC's architecture be stretched? How will engineers handle the very different design challenges presented by the PC platform's expansion into low-cost consumer systems, "superportables," and workstations, among others? Make no mistake about it, the fragmentation of the PC is "very real and will continue," said Dan Russell, director of platform marketing at Intel. For Example:

- Some engineers designing home computers say they are hungry for more integrated silicon, and others are keeping an eye on alternative operating systems.
- A new class of small notebooks will emerge at Comdex that do not rely on X86 processors.
- Workstation makers say they are simply looking for ways to handle the power and thermal issues that Intel's upcoming processors will generate.

"Still," said Russell, "some technologies, like power management, will run across all these systems." Of all the emerging PC markets, the low-cost consumer segment seems to be where the bulk of the action is. Some consultants estimate that sub-\$1,000 consumer desktops will account for as much as 40 percent of retail PC sales this year. In this market the call has been for integrated silicon. Responding to that need, Micron Electronics, in Nampa, Idaho, is partnering with semiconductor companies, whose names it won't disclose, to roll out its Stiletto chipset. The logic uses a Uniform Memory Access architecture similar to the Plato chipset from S3 Corp. It integrates audio, video, modem, Universal Serial Bus, and a south bridge into a fairly small single device, said Dean Klein, chief technology officer at the PC maker. "This chip includes a memory port, CPU

interface, and several other ports to form what is essentially a three-chip PC," said Klein. "That's consumerizing the PC."

The device will support Socket 7 processors and be available to third parties, though Klein would not reveal production details. For its part, Compaq Computer has ordered integrated silicon from Cyrix in the form of the MediaGx to meet the needs of its low-cost consumer systems. But the semiconductor industry is not yet directing enough attention to this area, according to one senior engineer in Compaq's consumer division, who asked not to be named.

"The whole industry needs to make a switch from marketing that is going nuts over megahertz to taking advantage of higher density silicon optimized for lower costs," said the engineer. "The PC is still like the first cell phones: It needs integration and an upgrade in technology. And we haven't begun to take advantage of quarter-micron technology yet." Seemingly ready to respond to the call for low-cost components is Intel. At an analysts' meeting in June, Paul Otellini, Intel's executive vice president for sales and marketing, said that the company has tracked and would respond to the demand for sub-\$1,000 systems with new variants of its Pentium II now in the works.

Gateway 2000, when it purchased the assets of Amiga earlier this year, seemed to indicate a belief that Microsoft Windows would not be the sole solution for its consumer push with high-end systems such as Destination, its hybrid PC-TV. However, Mike Grubbs, director of global convergence products for Gateway, continues to wave the Microsoft flag. "We haven't gotten to the point where we have pushed the PC architecture as far as it can go, although we recognize it's not the only architecture that will exist," said Grubbs, who expected to show a version of Destination with enhanced audio and video capabilities this fall. "We're looking at other architectures and keeping our eyes open."

Still, Grubbs -- who was part of the original design team on one of the first retail microcomputers, the Tandy TRS-80 -- defended the PC architecture as the right choice for Destination. "If we had built some exotic architecture dedicated to perform a specific function we would have found it much more difficult to integrate things like DVD or the latest DSP technology or the rapidly improved signal-to-noise ratio in our audio subsystem. With the PC, we can take advantage of a large industry infrastructure of people who are doing some very clever things."

"On the other hand, the PC has some baggage," Grubbs added. "I believe the architecture will evolve to have more segmented and specialized implementations." "We don't want to see too much fragmentation because too many baseline standards are confusing," said Russell of Intel. The company's goal is to define a basic PC and "break out personalities to create new platform types," he said. Of all those different spins of the PC, the high-end consumer system is perhaps the one most likely to head off in its own direction, he added.

"That may get split out over time," said Russell. On another front, mobile PC designers see an opportunity to radically ratchet back the power requirements in a new class of small notebook computers that do not use the generally power-hungry X86 processors. Leveraging Microsoft's Windows CE, a number of mobile systems makers expect to preview systems variously called superportables or mini-notebooks that use a variety of processors -- including the Digital StrongARM and others -- that offer faster speeds and lower power consumption than typical X86 chips.

Last year saw the first wave of CE devices, a set of generally look-alike handheld organizers that offer connectivity with the Windows desktop. This year's show is expected to reveal a broader group of experimental products that live in a space between a pocket-sized organizer and a full-sized notebook. "For Windows CE devices to be well received, they need to be very aggressive in price and targeted to what the PC market doesn't do well -- offer instant-on functionality and dramatically longer battery life," said Tom Schmidt, a mobile systems designer at Digital Equipment, in Maynard, Mass. "There's the question with these products over where you draw the line in the sand for what's the minimum basic system."

Storage Sacrificed

Generally, the mini-notebooks will offer small VGA monochrome or color LCDs and larger keyboards than their handheld cousins, but they will sacrifice a hard disk, CD-ROM drive, or floppy disk to achieve a size smaller than the typical 8.5-by-11-inch notebook. Mass storage may come in the form of a few tens of megabytes from any of the market's several miniature flash cards, or simply via on-board RAM. The systems will generally come in at less than \$1,000.

Mitsubishi Electronics has already taken a crack at this market with a full-blown Wintel design, the Amity CN, which uses Windows 95 and a 133-MHz Pentium. It weighs 2.4 pounds and measures 9.3-by-6.7-by-1.34 inches, builds in a 1.2-gigabyte hard disk and uses a 7.5-inch enhanced DSTN color display for \$1,995. Advances in lithium ion batteries and Intel X86 processors mean today's versions offer longer battery life and better performance than the earlier ones, said Daniel Jones, senior manager of product planning at Mitsubishi's mobile computing division, in Cypress, Calif.

Toshiba's Libretto 70CT handheld system, introduced earlier this month, has gone even a step further in shrinking a full Wintel PC into a device that measures 8.3-by-4.5-by-1.3 inches. The 1.87-pound computer uses a new 120-MHz Pentium processor and runs Windows 95. Moving in yet another mobile direction, Mitsubishi will show at Comdex a prototype developed with Hewlett-Packard of a standard 8.5-by-11-inch notebook that is a stunning 0.7 inches thin and weighs just 3.19 pounds. Called the Panther, it should be shipped early next year in separate versions sold by Mitsubishi and HP. The Panther uses a thin 12.1-inch TFT LCD made by Mitsubishi. The push for ever-larger displays has driven systems makers to seek such thin form factors to keep their overall systems as light and small as possible. The Panther sports a hard disk that stores more than a gigabyte, a 233-MHz Intel Tillamook Pentium processor, and up to 64 MB of RAM. (A CD-ROM drive and other peripherals are located on a separate docking station.)

The Panther system is powered by lithium polymer batteries made by Ultralife Batteries, in Montvale, N.J. Polymer batteries can be shaped to the confines of a system, opening the door to thin packs. Mitsubishi has licensed the Ultralife technology and intends to make the polymer batteries in a Japanese factory. But like the mininotebooks, the Panther may suffer from a nonstandard keyboard. Although small notebooks use less than full-sized keyboards, which users have rejected, the Panther uses a new keyboard with a very small vertical travel distance to accommodate the system's thinness. The keys are generally the same size as those on normal notebooks, but their feel is different and may cause users to shy away from the otherwise novel design.

Power is certainly a top concern for PC workstation makers. "Total system power requirements have gone up very little to date," said Wolfgang Baltes,

R&D manager for performance systems at Hewlett-Packard's PC operations in Grenoble, France. But that will change with the advent of Intel's Merced processor, which is expected to boost the performance of tomorrow's workstations -- and suck a significantly higher amount of power from them. "Today's PC workstation, which consumes more than 300 watts, could become a Merced system that consumes 600 to 700 watts," Baltes said. "That's in the class of a small bathroom heater. You can't just put that on your desktop."

The power demands in tomorrow's workstations will not be confined to the CPU, but will come from a whole new generation of Unix-class components "with power and cooling requirements the PC industry has never seen before," Baltes added. "Our graphics subsystems draw 10 to 15 Watts today, but we have plans for new graphics cards that will draw in the range of 100 watts. Today's adapter cards are not designed to dissipate 100 Watts. We will even have to change the way we bring power to an Accelerated Graphics Port card." The power and speed demands are forcing a shift to new design tools at HP's PC group, a move likely to leverage the RISC workstation heritage of the company.

"There are lots of tools for gigahertz-class design in the world," Baltes said. "We just need to move them into the PC space with its focus on high volumes and low costs." But as they ramp up their technological savvy, PC workstation makers believe the price tag of their systems will trend upward, too. "To make these systems perform well with the EMI and signal-quality issues, you will end up delivering complex four- and six-layer boards [that] don't hit the cost points the industry typically offers," said Satish Gupta, general manager of professional workstation products for the IBM Personal Computer Co., in Research Triangle Park, N.C. "There will be a leap in costs for all the elements."

EDUPAGE STR Focus

Keeping the users informed

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ISP SUES SPAMMER

SimpleNet, a San Diego-based Internet service provider, has filed a lawsuit against several companies and individuals that allegedly used its servers to send hundreds of thousands of e-mail messages advertising a book called "Meet, Attract and Date Gorgeous Women." But unlike previous "spam" cases alleging civil violations, SimpleNet is requesting that criminal charges be brought against the perpetrators: "Criminal charges are being brought because the named defendants have orchestrated an intricate and highly deceptive plan to defraud SimpleNet and its customers," says the plaintiff's attorney. SimpleNet has also filed a civil claim in federal court, alleging that the defendants illicitly used company resources and damaged its reputation. The bulk mail and responding flame mail caused SimpleNet's servers to crash on at least one occasion, and the unsolicited messages have caused several organizations to filter out any messages coming from the SimpleNet domain. (Net Insider 13 Nov 97)

AOL NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR MALICIOUS POSTING

In another case involving liability of Internet service providers, a federal appeals court has ruled that a man who received death threats after some anonymous enemy posted false and malicious information about him could not hold America Online responsible. Noting that the federal Communications Decency Act of 1996 immunizes Internet and online providers from lawsuits over material that comes from third parties, the Court said that, if Internet service providers were held responsible for such messages, they would "have a natural incentive to remove messages upon notification, whether the contents were defamatory or not. Liability upon notice has a chilling effect on the freedom of Internet speech." (AP 14 Nov 97)

MASTERING THE NET

Marlboro College in Vermont will begin offering two new graduate programs in January -- a master of arts in teaching with the Internet and a master of science in Internet strategy. "Knowledge-making is changing in every field because of this technology," says the college's president. "We're not focusing just on the Internet, but how people can use this kind of cardinal technology in a broader way." The programs will focus on teaching teachers how to incorporate the Internet into the classroom experience, and

teaching managers how to oversee an organization's Internet strategy.
(Boston Globe 14 Nov 97)

GIANT CD-ROMS SLATED FOR 2000

Norsam Technologies Inc. in Albuquerque, N.M., is developing a CD-ROM technology that would enable users to store up to 165 gigabytes on a single disk -- almost 10 times as much data as can be stored on digital video disks. The additional capacity is made possible by replacing the prevailing 800- and 350 nanometer laser writing technology with a more powerful 50-nanometer particle beam. "The Norsam HD-ROM will ... be a major competitor in the high-availability data arena," says the company's president. The HD-ROM disks will be the same size as current CD-ROMs, but will require users to install high-density readers in their devices.

(InternetWeek 14 Nov 97)

HIGH-TECH THEFT

A group of Ottawa technology, law and insurance firms have joined with police to start Canada's first technology anti-theft association. Police say thefts, break-ins and robberies of computer parts have cost Eastern Ontario businesses \$40-million over the past year. Five years earlier, almost no thefts were reported. (Toronto Financial Post 14 Nov 97 p6)

DEFINING INFORMATION

The Computer Science and Telecommunications Board of the National Research Council is information technology literacy issues. Sets of questions have been developed for computer and communications scientists and engineers, employers and labor professionals, librarians, K-12 educators, etc. about the nature and scope of information technology literacy, and you are invited to submit your answers to those questions in the form of a short position paper. See < <http://www2.nas.edu/cstbweb/549a.html> >

SOLVING "THE YEAR 2000 PROBLEM" -- THE OLD-FASHIONED WAY

Like administrators throughout the world, Treasury Board officials in Canada are trying to solve the problem caused by computer numbering systems that are unable to deal with the date for the year 2000 and beyond. Treasury Board Secretary Marcel Masse says that the public service is ready to write dates on checks by hand in the year 2000. (Ottawa Citizen 13 Nov 97A5)

EDUPAGE EXPOSED AGAIN TO CENSOR'S KNIFE

Because we used a "red flag" word, the last issue of Edupage was rejected as salacious by the filtering software used at one U.S. institution of higher learning. The offending word was found in the sentence: "The new bill is more narrowly focused than the CDA, and is targeted strictly at impeding the flow of commercial pornography on the World Wide Web." (Of course, because of the same filtering software, some of you out there will never read this issue of Edupage to know why you were unable to read the last issue of Edupage. Oh well.)

U.S REGAINS SUPERCOMPUTER LEAD

A study by researchers at the University of Tennessee and the University of Mannheim indicates that the U.S. has built 16 of the world's 20 fastest supercomputers, with the other 4 built by Japanese companies. A year ago,

the Japanese had the 3 fastest supercomputers and 10 of the fastest supercomputers were made in Japan. Currently, the world's fastest computer is a massively parallel processing machine built by Intel using 9,152 Pentium P6 processors and capable of a speed of more than 1.3 trillion mathematical operations per second. In parallel processing, a large problem is broken up into many small pieces, and the various pieces are solved simultaneously ("in parallel") by a massively large number of small processors. Only one of the 20 fastest computers is a traditional vector machine which has one or several high-speed processors. (New York Times 17 Nov 97)

APPLE COURTING NEW CEO?

Oracle CEO and Apple Computer board member Larry Ellison says that Apple is very close to making an offer to the top candidate for the Apple CEO job: "We're getting close. We have someone we like very much... He's really terrific." Ellison also says Apple will develop a low-cost network computer, and that the key to Apple's future is the existing Mac OS, not Rhapsody (the next-generation Mac operating system). He predicts that network computers will eventually supersede PCs in the computer marketplace, thanks to their adaptability and easy upgrade capabilities. "The PC is truly a device that only an engineer can love." (InfoWorld Electric 14 Nov 97)

SUN ON FAST TRACK FOR JAVA STANDARD

Sun Microsystems' request to make its Java software an official technical standard has received a majority of favorable votes from member countries of the International Organization for Standardization in Geneva. The move is part of Sun's strategy to encourage adoption among overseas governments and businesses, many of which will use only ISO-approved technologies. A Sun spokeswoman said the company had received unofficial notice that only two of the countries voting, the U.S. and China, had voted against the proposal, with 19 for and 2 abstaining. (Wall Street Journal 17 Nov 97)

MASTERCARD, AT&T TO BUILD PRIVATE NETWORK

MasterCard International is working with AT&T in building a 70-country virtual private network to replace its X.25 packet-switching network. The credit card company anticipates reducing transaction waiting times in half for its 23,000 financial institutions. In the first year alone, the combined times savings for companies that use credit card terminals is expected to total 47 years. The new IP-based network will enable MasterCard to increase and decrease capacity as needed, expanding for peak times like the Christmas holidays, and shrinking when buying subsides. In addition to flexibility, the network is considered a key component of MasterCard's strategy for the future of electronic money. "It has to be anywhere, on time, and every time," says a senior VP with the company. "Unlike in the credit-card business, there is absolutely no means for failure." (Information Week 16 Nov 97)

RANDOMLY GROOVY

Scientists at Silicon Graphics have taken the mesmerizing flow of the lava lamp to the next level of utility -- using the favorite fixtures of the '60s to generate truly random numbers, something computers cannot do. The process involves using a digital camera to snap periodic shots of six oozing cylinders, combining those images with electronic noise and converting it into 1s and 0s, and then using the Secure Hash Algorithm from the National Institute of Standards and Technologies to compress and

scramble the binary string to create a seed value for a standard random-number generator. (Scientific American Nov 97)

MICROSOFT DOUBLES SHARE OF BROWSER MARKET

Over the past nine months, Microsoft has doubled its share of the Internet browser market to 40%, up from 20% at the end of 1996, according to a Dataquest survey. Arch rival Netscape still leads with close to 58%, but that's down from 73% earlier. "If Microsoft's growth in browser share continues, Dataquest projects Internet Explorer to reach parity with Netscape Navigator as early as the second quarter of 1998," says a Dataquest analyst. "The important battle to watch is the change by version -- particularly, will Navigator version 3 users move to Navigator version 4, or will they choose Internet Explorer, or both?" Microsoft is currently under investigation by the Justice Department over the bundling of its Internet Explorer 4.0 software into its Windows operating system.

(AP 18 Nov 97)

INTERGRAPH SUES INTEL OVER PATENTS

Intergraph Corp. has sued Intel in federal court, charging the chipmaker with a "systematic campaign of coercion" and violation of contracts and patents. Intel has countersued, alleging that Intergraph's patents are invalid and that it wasn't infringing on them anyway. The two companies have been discussing their differences for months, but Intergraph apparently decided to sue after Intel refused to help fix a bug Intergraph engineers found in Intel's Pentium II chip. Intergraph enlisted the aid of another company to help it, which resulted in Intel warning that company that it would be violating its contract with Intel if it worked with Intergraph. Intergraph is seeking monetary damages in the suit. Separately, Intel has filed suit against Silicon Storage Technology Inc., alleging infringement of Intel's flash-memory chip patents. (Wall Street Journal 18 Nov 97)

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY IS NATION'S LARGEST INDUSTRY

A study based on Commerce Department data and sponsored by the American Electronics Association (AEA) and the Nasdaq stock market says that the field of information technology (including both computing and telecommunications) is now the nation's largest industry, ahead of construction, food products, and automobile manufacturing. And the AEA's president took the occasion of the study's release to urge lawmakers to learn more about technology: "Whether we like it or not, high-technology issues are going to be front and center in Washington and in state capitals during the next few years. At the state and national level, policy makers have a lot of positive impressions about the high-technology industry, but often very little knowledge of it. The biggest public policy threat to the high-technology field is the ignorance of technology and of how these industries work." (New York Times 18 Nov 97)

GRAVES SAYS INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY WON'T WORK WITHOUT A MARKET

William H. Graves, who recently left the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to form the Learning Technology Research Institute in the Research Triangle area of North Carolina, says that the use of technology in the classroom will never become routine unless businesses get involved in it, much as publishers now produce textbooks. Graves is also senior vice president of Collegis, a consulting company specializing in the academic market sector. (Chronicle Of Higher Education 21 Nov 97)

TEXAS EDUCATORS SEE LAPTOPS AS THE \$1.25 SOLUTION

Faced with \$1.8 billion in projected costs for textbooks over the next six years, the Texas Board of Education is seriously considering replacing textbooks with laptop computers that would be lent to the state's 3.7 million students for a cost of \$300 million a year. Board Chairman Jack Christie, who says "there's no way it would not improve student learning," asserts that "a year ago we replaced social studies books that still had Ronald Reagan as President, the Berlin Wall standing and the Soviet Union as one country. With laptops, you can upgrade that for \$1.25." (New York Times 19 Nov 97)

ARMED ROBBERS STEAL MICROSOFT CD-ROMS AND COAs IN SCOTLAND

Four masked men held up a manufacturing facility in Scotland and got away with 100,000 CD-ROMs and 200,000 certificates of authority (4x4" papers with holographic images, watermarks, special printing, bar graphs and serialized numbers) worth millions of dollars. A Microsoft executive says: "We are doing everything in our power to ensure that counterfeit product resulting from this robbery doesn't reach consumers in the United States or elsewhere and that, if it does, the trail is tracked straight to the source." (Wall Street Journal 19 Nov 97)

SUN SAYS MICROSOFT DECEIVES CUSTOMERS ABOUT JAVA COMPATIBILITY

Sun has asked a federal judge to forbid Microsoft to use Sun's Java logo on its Microsoft's Internet Explorer browser software. Sun claims Microsoft is deceiving consumers by printing the "Java compatible" logo on its software, and a Sun attorney says: "It's like buying a can of Coca-Cola and finding ginger ale inside. The customer trusted the brand and was deceived... We are making a simple demand: because these Microsoft products do not pass Sun's compatibility tests... Microsoft must be stopped from using the Java compatible logo." (Financial Times 19 Nov 97)

WEATHER FORECASTING SYSTEM

IBM is demonstrating a new local weather forecasting system, developed in cooperation with the National Weather Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, that can create detailed forecasts, accurate down to a three-mile range. Cost of the system ranges from \$1 million to well over \$10 million, depending on how much detail is required, how quickly the forecast is needed, and how many three-dimensional modeling workstations are required to view the results. (San Jose Mercury News 19 Nov 97)

LUCENT UNVEILS SMALLER, FASTER TRANSISTOR

Scientists at Lucent Technologies' Bell Labs have come up with a transistor that is five times faster and one-fourth the size of conventional models. The tiny transistor -- about 1,000 times smaller than the width of a human hair -- is also a power miser, consuming between 60 and 160 times less power than transistors currently in use. The company has not said when the new technology will become commercially available, but industry experts project such transistors to be standard by the year 2010. (Wall Street Journal 20 Nov 97)

WIRELESS CABLE TV

BellSouth is now offering a wireless digital TV service that will reach about 80% of homes in the New Orleans area and that will be the nation's first all-digital TV offering. Though digital satellite carriers are not allowed to offer local programs, BellSouth's customers will be able to purchase as many as 160 channels at prices ranging from \$15 to \$80 a month. (USA Today 19 Nov 97)

AOL REACHES TEN MILLION SUBSCRIBERS NOW

America Online has exceeded the 10 million-subscriber level by adding more than 3 million members in the United States, Canada, Europe and Japan over the past year. Forrester Research . Based in Cambridge, Mass., says AOL's new numbers give it about 20 percent of the world's online population and half of the online households in the United States, making it a very attractive advertising medium. (AP 18 Nov 97)

VIDAL SAYS COMPUTERS ENCOURAGE "LOUSY, REPETITIVE PROSE"

Novelist Gore Vidal says his writing would have suffered over the years had he been using a computer: "In general, people who write on computers don't write nearly as well as those who type or write longhand. They become 'easy settlers,' as we used to call movie writers who settled for their first notion of a scene. The computer page looks too perfect to alter the first time around. Hence, lousy, repetitive prose." (Forbes ASAP 1 Dec 97)

DOWN TO THE WIRE

In hopes of being able to finally show a profit by the end of 1998, Wired Digital (publisher of the Wired News Service and the Hotwired Web site) is cutting its staff by 20%. The company recently abandoned its attempt to offer features focused on health, sports and entertainment, and its parent organization, Wired Ventures, recently jettisoned its plans to become an independent book publisher. (New York Times 20 Nov 97)

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Kids Computing Corner
Frank Sereno, Editor
fsereno@streport.com

The Kids' Computing Corner
Computer news and software reviews
from a parent's point of view

From Frank's Desk

For this week's column, I've decided to place the review at the front and have the news last. I've assumed that people read my column for the reviews so this will make it easier to find them.

On the personal side, the tentative delivery date of my family's third child has been set to December 3rd. Thanks to everyone who sent along congratulations when the news was posted a few weeks ago.

JumpStart 1st Grade Reading
Windows/Mac CD-ROM
ages 5 to 7

approximately \$30

Knowledge Adventure
1311 Grand Central Ave.
Glendale, CA 91201
818-246-4400
<http://www.adventure.com>

Program Requirements

IBM	Macintosh
OS: Windows 3.1, Windows 95	OS: System 7.1
CPU: 486DX/66	CPU: 68040/40
HD Space: 15 MB 15 MB	HD Space:
Memory: 8 MB, 16MB for Win95	Memory: 8 MB
Graphics: 640 by 480 with 256 colors 256 colors, 13" monitor	Graphics:
CD-ROM: Double-speed	CD-ROM: Double-speed
Audio: 8-bit Windows compatible sound card	
Other: mouse	

reviewed by Frank Sereno (fsereno@uti.com)

Knowledge Adventure's JumpStart 1st Grade Reading is an enchanting educational program. This CD-ROM features eight activities that encourage children to recognize sight words, learn letter sounds, and to develop reading comprehension and spelling skills. The program uses superior animation, delightful music and engaging voice characterizations to create a fun and immersive learning environment.

Frankie is a fearless circus dog that must save his four mates from an evil spell cast by Mel, a malevolent magician. To free them, he must assemble jigsaw puzzles of each performer. The pieces can be found at the Lost and Found, but your child cannot get the pieces without tickets earned by playing the learning activities.

An important feature of the program is that your child can play any game as long as he likes, but he can only earn a few tickets. He cannot earn more tickets at that activity until he plays some others. This encourages the child to play a variety of activities for a more rounded learning experience. JumpStart 1st Grade Reading also features a monitoring program that tracks your child's progress and gives him the option of increasing or decreasing the skill level based on his level of success. It also includes a terrific parent's section for observing your child's progress in numerous reading skills. Parents also have the option to print pages from an activity book included on the disc.

The learning activities are all captivating and are based on games or activities you can find at a circus. My children (first and third graders) played the games for hours. More importantly, my first-grade son seemed to learn much from the program. The smoothly animated characters made the activities very enjoyable. It's even fun to watch the dastardly and despicable Mel try to foil Frankie. The heroes were all delightful. The program is embellished with cool tunes, amusing animations and jokes.

With its intuitive interface, progressive difficulty and numerous activities, JumpStart 1st Grade Reading provides a friendly, challenging

learning environment. Knowledge Adventure backs this first-rate disc with a 90-day moneyback no-questions-asked guarantee that assures you of excellent value and complete satisfaction. JumpStart 1st Grade Reading is a wonderful complement to your child's schooling.

In the News

KIDS CAN NOW FLEX THEIR BRAIN MUSCLES WITH SUPERMAN IN NEW ACTIVITY CENTER FROM KNOWLEDGE ADVENTURE

Knowledge Adventure brings the #1 super hero - Superman - to CD-ROM, promising hours of skill-building fun for young crime fighters

The Superman Activity Center, a new multimedia CD-ROM based on the #1 super hero from the hit DC Comics series and Warner Bros. animated TV show, is now available from Knowledge Adventure, Inc. This exciting new CD-ROM for kids ages 5 - 10 features 13 challenging games, puzzles and activities that build critical-thinking and problem-solving skills.

In the Superman Activity Center, kids can interact in the Man of Steel's worlds: Krypton, Smallville and Metropolis. Kids will have fun writing their own Daily Planet front-page story with Lois Lane and Clark Kent, learning valuable safety tips using Clark's x-ray vision, and matching wits with Lex Luthor in a game of strategy and skill. The Superman Activity Center also features original voice-over talent from the animated television series, including Dana Delany ("China Beach") as Lois Lane, Shelley Fabares ("Coach" and "The Donna Reed Show") as Ma Kent, and Clancy Brown ("The Shawshank Redemption" and "Highlander") as Lex Luthor.

Says Larry Gross, president of Knowledge Adventure, Inc., "Warner Bros. and DC Comics have a long history of success in children's cartoon programming and character development. Superman continues to be the most popular super hero in the world, and he is a perfect character to deliver positive and educational messages to children. Kids will love to explore Superman's worlds as they play an exciting variety of challenging skill-building activities featured in the Superman Activity Center."

New Activity Center Line

Knowledge Adventure recently introduced its new Activity Center line with The Adventures of Batman & Robin Activity Center and FairyTale - A True Story Activity Center. Both combine popular entertainment with exciting opportunities for exploration, creativity and learning.

Based on the hit DC Comics series and Warner Bros. animated TV show, The Adventures of Batman & Robin Activity Center challenges young crime fighters ages 5 - 10 to 11 exciting activities, mind-bending puzzles and fun games in Gotham City.

FairyTale - A True Story Activity Center is based on Paramount Pictures' motion picture starring Peter O'Toole and Harvey Keitel, and sweeps kids ages 7 - 11 away to an enchanting fantasy world filled with fairy folklore and 14 creative activities.

Superman Mania

A timeless American icon, Superman ranks as the #1 super hero among kids and adults ages 6 - 49, according to Marketing Evaluations Cartoon Q. DC Comics first introduced Superman in 1938, and the Man of Steel is just as strong today. In fact, 10 best-selling monthly Superman comics continue to entertain over six million readers worldwide every month.

In September 1996, Warner Bros. launched an all-new animated Superman television series on Kids' WB, which has garnered positive reviews by critics. Warner Bros. also recently debuted "Superman: The Escape," the world's fastest and tallest roller coaster, at Six Flags Magic Mountain. In addition, 1998 will mark Superman's 60th anniversary.

An Action-Packed Activity Center

The Superman Activity Center features 13 fun-filled, skill-building activities in the three worlds of Superman:

Krypton

In Krypton, kids can play games in the home of Superman's parents, Jor-El and Lara, and discover the wonders of Superman's home planet. Kids can build listening and memory skills by taking on the Brainiac Challenge, helping Jor-El crack a security access code by repeating progressively challenging sequences of musical notes. Kids can also build a prototype of the rocket that Jor-El used to send his son to Earth by completing a logic maze, and use their creativity to paint colorful scenes of Superman's first home and family.

Smallville

Kids will have lots of fun discovering Superman's hometown, Smallville, where he first discovered his powers. In this world, kids can use Clark's x-ray vision to spot common neighborhood hazards such as frayed electrical wires and unlabeled containers of dangerous chemicals. Kids can also color scenes from Clark's childhood with Ma Kent.

Metropolis

In Metropolis, kids can explore the big city and visit the Daily Planet Building, downtown area and S.T.A.R. Labs. In the Daily Planet Building, kids can write their own newspaper stories with Clark Kent, color photos in Jimmy Olsen's darkroom, lay out the paper at the editor's desk and recover scrambled profiles from Lois Lane's computer. In the downtown area, kids can try to catch Livewire in a fast-action memory game and match wits with Lex Luthor in a game of strategy and skill. In S.T.A.R. Labs, kids can learn about 18 different constellations in a connect-the-stars activity and help Superman recover his anti-kryptonite suit and capture villains by completing a challenging labyrinth.

Kids can play the activities as part of a continuing storyline featuring animated narratives, or independently. In the story mode, kids can follow the evolution of Superman -- from his escape from Krypton as a baby -- to when he first discovers his powers in Smallville -- to the beginning of his crime-fighting career in Metropolis. Each world features several activities that kids must complete in order to advance to the next world. In the activity mode, kids can play any activity in any order they choose. The mazes, puzzles and games re-set into new patterns each time they are played, creating a new challenge every time. In addition, three levels of difficulty can be adjusted for each activity.

Availability, Pricing and System Requirements

The Superman Activity Center is immediately available at most major computer stores and mass-merchant chains nationwide. The Windows 95/Windows 3.1/ Macintosh CD-ROM is expected to be priced at approximately \$20. Customers can call (800) 542-4240 for sales and ordering information. System requirements are:

Windows 95 and Windows 3.1 CD-ROM

486SX 25MHz or better; Microsoft Windows 3.1 or Windows 3.1 CD-ROM Windows

95; 8 MB RAM; 10 MB of free disk space; 256-color SVGA graphics; 8-bit sound; double-speed CD-ROM drive or faster.

Macintosh CD-ROM

Performa 550 or better or Power Macintosh; System 7.1 or higher; 640x480, 256-color video display; minimum 2500K unused block of memory; double-speed CD-ROM drive or faster.

Knowledge Adventure, Inc. is a leading educational software publisher best known for pioneering grade-based software with the best-selling, award-winning JumpStart Learning System. The company is also known for its Adventure series and new Activity Center line. Founded in 1991, Knowledge Adventure is a subsidiary of CUC Software Services, Inc., a subsidiary of CUC International Inc. (NYSE: CU).

Warner Bros. Consumer Products, which includes the Licensing, Studio Stores, Warner Bros. Interactive Entertainment, WB Sport and WB Toys divisions, is a division of Time Warner Entertainment Company, L.P.

DC Comics is a division of Warner Bros., a Time Warner Entertainment Company. Since 1938, DC has created over 5,000 characters, including the world's most popular super-heroes: Superman, Batman and Wonder Woman. Their world-famous roster of characters have been favorites for years in comic books, movies, television, TV animation, and most recently, in CD-ROM and on-line productions.

#

DAVIDSON & ASSOCIATES, INC. TO SPOTLIGHT
TWO OF ITS NEWEST TITLES AT COMDEX:
FISHER-PRICE LITTLE PEOPLE DISCOVERY FARM
AND SPANISH FOR THE REAL WORLD

New worlds of discovery for toddlers and teenagers
from the leader in educational software

Tonight, at the ShowStoppers event taking place during the COMDEX computer show, Davidson & Associates, Inc., a leader in educational software, will preview two of its newest titles: Fisher-Price Little People Discovery Farm and Spanish for the Real World.

Fisher-Price Little People Discovery Farm offers an exciting day at the farm with Farmer Jed, where toddlers ages 18 months to 3 years will learn about delightful barnyard animals, growing crops and daily farm activities. In Spanish for the Real World, students 10 and up put the pedal to the metal in an exciting road rally through Mexico; as they compete to win, they'll build their Spanish-speaking skills.

"Both Fisher-Price Little People Discovery Farm and Spanish for the Real World expand two very successful and popular product lines from Davidson: the Fisher-Price series, with over a dozen titles based on Fisher-Price toys, and the 'Real World' series which takes a fun, 'real-life' and interactive approach to important subjects such as math and foreign languages," said Larry Gross, president of Davidson & Associates.

"Extensive usability testing and feedback from our customers have shown that kids just can't get enough of exciting, multimedia titles like these."

Fun on the Farm for Fisher-Price Toddlers

By its very nature, the farm is a fascinating place for young children:

they can feed the animals, grow crops, sing barnyard songs and help baby animals find their mothers. Children ages 18 months to 3 years will do all this and more in Fisher-Price Little People Discovery Farm, the latest in Davidson's Fisher-Price series.

The familiar Fisher-Price Little People figures are their hosts in five exploratory activities that teach counting, animal names, the concepts of "same" and "different," and listening to instructions. Each activity will captivate kids with adorable animations, toe-tapping music and different games depending on whether they use the mouse or the keyboard. Also included is a printable Little People Farm Animals coloring book.

The Windows 95/Windows 3.1/Macintosh CD-ROM began shipping earlier this month, and is immediately available at most major computer stores, mass-merchant chains and toy stores nationwide. It is expected to be priced at approximately \$20.

Learning a Foreign Language is Fun!

First-year Spanish students will be part of a "real-life" experience in Spanish for the Real World as they compete in a road rally through Mexico. They will be immersed in the language as they play seven fun activities and three arcade-style games. Rich content - including an on-screen, context-sensitive Spanish English handbook; grammar and usage tips; over 500 vocabulary words; and numerous opportunities to hear Spanish spoken by native speakers - perfectly complements first-year Spanish curriculum.

The Windows 95/Windows 3.1/Power Macintosh CD-ROM is expected to be available during the first quarter of 1998 at most major computer stores and mass-merchant chains nationwide for approximately \$30.

Davidson & Associates, Inc. is a leading publisher and distributor of multimedia educational and entertainment software for both the home and school markets. The company is internationally renowned for its award-winning Blaster Learning System, which has sold 5 million copies; the Fisher-Price series, CD-ROMs based on popular Fisher-Price toys; and many other innovative multimedia titles for children of all ages. Founded in 1982, Davidson & Associates, Inc. is a wholly owned subsidiary of CUC Software Services, Inc., a subsidiary of CUC International Inc. (NYSE: CU).

#

Jason Sereno, STR Staff
jsereno@streport.com

Compton's Deluxe Interactive
Encyclopedia 1998 Edition
Windows or Mac CD-ROM
Street Price: \$69.95

The Learning Company Inc.
One Athenaeum Street
Cambridge, MA 02142
1-800-227-5609
www.learningco.com

The Learning Company's new Compton Interactive Encyclopedia '98 Deluxe is a very reliable source of information. It contains loads of facts, multimedia, and maps. When purchasing the program you receive an atlas, dictionary, thesaurus, and timeline as well. Not only are there more features on the Deluxe edition than the regular, there are also free monthly updates via the Internet. Other accessories from the Internet include asking Compton's librarians to recommend resources to help you find information. This is a very beneficial program that even helped me on my English homework!

The Interactive Encyclopedia '98 Deluxe has an abundance of information. This twenty-six volume encyclopedia has over 16,000 photographs and illustrations. Also inside is more than one hundred and fifty videos, animations, and slide shows. In addition to, there are twenty hours of sounds that include historic speeches and musical samples. Included with the Deluxe Edition is Compton's 1997 World Atlas. It contains over four hundred and fifty maps of the world. Compton includes a dictionary, thesaurus, and timeline with this package too. The style is very comprehensive and comparable to Java pages on the Internet.

Speaking of the Internet, '98 Deluxe gives you free updates located at Compton's homepage (www.comptons.com). The annual subscription fee for monthly updates is \$19.95. Also available at the web page is another great feature: Ask the Librarian. It is a way to consult with Compton's team of experts on online resources that pertain to the topic you are searching. They find the best reading material, pictures, maps, and other materials. Almost every article in the encyclopedia has a URL that you can browse for more information. Users without the Internet will still benefit from the information but will not be able to access the web pages or upgrades Internet users will.

I decided to put Compton's new encyclopedia to the ultimate test. My English class had just gotten done reading the Crucible. My teacher had assigned us groups and told each person to write an editorial, feature, and news article for an imaginary Puritan newspaper. We were to include visual aides in the paper as well. I decided to use this encyclopedia as a reference. I was amazed at the information I found on witch hunts, Puritans, and the Salem witch trials. There were many drawings and

pictures of Salem and Puritans. I also found information on McCarthyism and other related topics.

The Learning Company has certainly done it again. Compton's Interactive Encyclopedia '98 Deluxe is a great source of reference. It has an abundance of information and an understandable interface. You receive much more when you purchase this encyclopedia too. I recommend this program to anyone in need of a sound reference tool. This encyclopedia updates itself every month. After purchasing it, you may never have to buy an encyclopedia again!

Windows Requirements

486/DX2/66 MHZ or better; 8 MB RAM; hard disk with 12 MB available; 256-color SVGA; double speed CD-ROM drive; Windows 3.1 or higher; DOS 5.0 or higher; Windows compatible sound card; mouse; printer and modem (optional)

Macintosh Requirements

call 1-800-227-5609

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File Format for STReport

All articles submitted to STReport for publication must be sent in the following format. Please use the format requested. Any files received that do not conform will not be used. The article must be in an importable word processor format for Word 6.0 and/or Word Perfect 7.. The margins are .05" left and 1.0" Monospaced fonts are not to be used. Please use proportional fonting only and at Twelve (12) points.

- '• No Indenting on any paragraphs!!
- '• No Indenting of any lines or "special gimmickery"
- '• No underlining!
- '• Columns shall be achieved through the use of tabs only. Or, columns in Word or Word Perfect format. Do NOT, under any circumstances, use the space bar.
- '• Most of all.. PLEASE! No ASCII "ART"!!
- '• There is no limits as to size, articles may be split into two if lengthy
- '• Actual Artwork should be in GIF, PCX, JPG, TIF, BMP, WMF file formats
- '• Artwork (pictures, graphs, charts, etc.)should be sent along with the article separately
- '• Please use a single font only in an article. TTF New Times Roman 12pt. is preferred. (VERY Strong Hint)

If there are any questions please use either E-Mail or call. On another note. the ASCII version of STReport is fast approaching the "end of the line" As the major Online Services move away from ASCII.. So shall STReport. All in the name of progress and improved readability. The amount of reader mail expressing a preference for our Adobe PDF enhanced

issue is running approximately 15 to 1 over the ASCII edition. I might add however, the requests for our issues to be done in HTML far outnumber both PDF and ascii. HTML is now under consideration. We'll keep you posted. Besides, STReport will not be caught in the old, worn out "downward compatibility dodge" we must move forward.

However, if the ASCII readership remains as high, rest assured. ASCII will stay. Right now, since STReport is offered on a number of closed major corporate Intranets as "required" Monday Morning reading.. Our ascii readers have nothing to worry themselves about. It looks like it is here to stay.

Many grateful thanks in advance for your enthusiastic co-operation and input.

Ralph F. Mariano, Editor
rmariano@streport.com
STReport International Online Magazine

Gaming Hotwire STR Feature - The World of Contemporary Gaming

Enter the world of Seven Kingdoms and take control of any of seven emerging civilizations: Chinese, Persians, Japanese, Greeks, Normans, Vikings, or Mayans. Begin with a single, modest village under your command, and an entire world to be conquered by force of arms, guile and persuasion, or by whatever other means you choose.

Wage open warfare on your rivals, or forge alliances with them. Send spies to infiltrate their ranks, or hold your spies back to guard against your enemies' prying eyes. Mine ore and manufacture goods, then build markets and establish trade routes to bring gold flowing into your coffers. Have your scientists research new weapons of war, or turn to the mystic arts and seek the ultimate power: the ability to summon the aid of the gods. All these choices and more are yours to make.

Features:

- Real-time empire building
- Multiplayer options for modem, LAN, serial connection, and Internet
- Random scenario generator for unlimited gameplay
- Espionage and counter-espionage
- Dynamic weather and random events such as fires and earthquakes
- Stunning 800 x 600 SVGA graphics
- Diplomatic options and trade between kingdoms
- Fantastic monsters and mighty gods
- Battles by land or at sea
- Peasants with individual skills and loyalties

Product Facts

- Category: Real-time strategy
 - Computer:
 - Windows 95 and
 - 100% DirectX-compatible system
 - Pentium processor
 - 75 Mhz minimum
 - 16 MB RAM
 - Graphics: SVGA capable of 800 x 600 resolution with 256 colors
 - Sound: Supports most popular sound cards
 - Interface: Mouse (required) & Keyboard
 - Media: 4x CDRom

www.magicqgames.com

Published by: Interactive Magic
Developed by: Enlight Software
A Game by Trevor Chan

Classics & Gaming Section
Editor Dana P. Jacobson
dpj@streport.com

>From the Atari Editor's Desk "Saying it like it is!"

Who said that there's an age barrier to using computers? I've been meaning to get to Maine to bring my father one of my spare STs so he could fool around with it and perhaps get on the Internet, etc. Well, getting down there from Massachusetts (yes, 'down there'). It's New England/DownEast-speak!) has been a problem; there's just been no time. In the meantime, my brother had been shopping around for his first PC and finally got one a few weeks ago.

He (my brother) got an AOL account a couple of weeks ago (gotta get him switched to Delphi!) and he naturally had to start surfing the 'Net. We've been corresponding a bit via e-mail just to see if he could (he's a newbie!). He brought his system over to my parents' house to show it off; and, he knew that my father was semi-interested in learning how to use a computer since I had mentioned it to him. Well, my father seemed taken with it all. My brother mentioned that he was interested in getting my father a machine, but he didn't want to spend \$1,000. I mentioned again that I was going to give Dad one of my ST machines, but my brother wouldn't hear of it. So, I suggested that he look around for a used 486 as they were likely pretty cheap these days; and, my father really didn't need anything fancy just to play around. Needless to say, within a week I get an e-mail from my brother saying that my father was set up with his "new" 486! He was fiddling around with it, trying to learn how to operate it (he was playing a few of the games that came with it). The other day I get an e-mail. Now the sender's address looked like my brother's, but it was a little different. I realized that it was my father, with his own AOL address! He sent me his first message!

So here he is, 77 years old, and playing on his first computer. He's

reading up on the machine so he can figure out how to use it; but, in the meantime, he's figured out how to surf the 'Net and send out e-mail.

I think it's great. I also think that it's a terrific pastime for anyone, but especially for someone who's retired and not as active as he or she might like. And it also proves that you're never too old to learn something new.

Next week is Thanksgiving. I thought that I'd get in my holiday greetings now rather than the day after the feast. This will be our first holiday in the new house; and we'll be spending it alone (the folks from Maine can't make it - long story). It should be fun, regardless. I hope that you and yours have a terrific holiday; it's one of my favorites. And we have a lot to be thankful for this year. Enjoy.

Until next time...

WenSuite 2.30a available

From: Nicholas Bales <bales@hol.fr>

Just thought people here might be interested : WenSuite 2.30a (still in french) is available at <http://wwwusers.imaginet.fr/~oxo/>

Here's the history file. Have fun.

>From OXO_Systems <oxo@imaginet.fr>:

02 nov 97 v2.25g

- The new mails are marked and their number is indicated in the info bar
- The mail/news background is now white and don't ever corrupt the web page background
- The speed of the fonts pop-up is now controlled for a better selection
- The fonts pop-up don't flash when they are in top or bottom of the list
- The disconnect phase in PPP Link is faster
- It is now possible to iconify web/mail/news windows with TOS4.04
- The texts of the title bars of the windows are now correctly separated for each window
- The process display of the compiler is not displayed for mail and news window
- The [CTRL]+[<-] and [CTRL]+[-] allows to switch mail and news data
- It is possible to use [SPACE] to go to the next message in mail and news (also available online)

03 nov 97 v2.25h

- Correction of a news bug causing the lost of the messages if an interrupt occurs (maybe introduced in the v2.21)
- The sliders have been improved, no more problems of selection with some TOS versions
- The position of the mail window is maintained when the displays are switched
- It is possible to add and E-Mail address to the directory list
- It is possible to get a message without reading it by holding [SHIFT] pressed during the mouse click
- Two more buttons are added to PAP Link, it is now possible to exit PPP

Link simply by pressing RETURN

-Clicking on an address of the directory prepares a new mail

-The scroll speed of big pages have been improved (but must be improved more)

-First tests of sending mail

17 nov 97 v2.30a

-Better detection of the begin and the end of the comments

-Rewriting of the PAP send/receive routines (PPP Link v1.10a)

-Modifications to the PPP structure: faster TCP/IP handshakes

-Implementation of the PPP compression methods ACFC, PFC and ACCM

-Adaptation of the TCP/IP receive window to the data flow Display of the news message download progress (in lines)

-Support of the <meta http-equiv="" refresh="" tag="" -the="" external="" image="" s="" of="" a="" html="" page="" (eg.="" counters)="" are="" now="" loaded="" sec="" ondary="" dns="" is="" managed="" -suppression="" some="" control="" characters="" in="" the="" mail="" news="" info="" line="" -faster="" display="" 2="" to="" 40="" times="" faster="" (depending="" on="" size="" page)="" -managing="" mim="" etype.dat="" file="" usage="" directory="" module="" if="" wildcards="" entered="" -better="" support="" big="" pages="" -it="" possible="" directly="" enter="" an="" ip="" adresses="" as="" url="" progression="" percentage="" always="" dis="" played="" during="" download="" -in="" message="" list,="" real="" name="" extra="" cted="" from="" e-mail="" address="" -correction="" tcp="" bug="" causing="" tc="" p="" open="" error="" -more="" error="" messages="" for="" better="" understand="" problems="" http="" host="" parameter="" has="" been="" added="" compatibility="" with="" servers="" enjoy!="" oxo="" systems="" hi!="" i="" have="" anipl="" ayer="" by="" didier="" meguignon.="" webpage="" located="" at="" http="" www5="" .tripnet.se="" ~mille="" tello="" tello.html="" also="" contains="" m_player="" and="" mp_sté="" guillaume.="" v1.20="" released="" today="" (saturday)="" chann="" el="" atari="" swedish="" members="" that="" translated="" into="" swedish="" program="" itself="" st-guide="" hyp-manual="" read="" laes_mig.txt="" how="" put="" it="" all="" work="" my="" service="" provider="" crashed="" one="" their="" three="" weeks="" ago="" very="" same="" where="" email="" homepage="" locat="" ed="" therefore="" visit="" counter="" started="" scratch="" before="" crash="" had="" just="" over="" 10000="" hits="" since="" feb="" 27="" (little="" more="" than="" half="" year).="" that's="" really="" lots="" visitors="" at="" than="" k="" you="" your="" interests="" two="" chapters="" about="" desktops="" archiv="" ers="" nearly="" finished="" now="" responses="" text="" files="" opinions="" so="" on="" they're="" best="" regards="" mille="" babic="" e-mail="" atari@re="" born.com="" homepage="" surf.to="" atari="" come.to="" present="" creation="" --="" cyber="" tour="" zdnet="" (november="" 13,="" 1997)="" --="" boston="" name="" s="" such="" tim="" berners-lee="" bill="" gates="" well-known="" even="" beyo="" nd="" technology="" world="" but="" what="" richard="" hamming="" man="" responsible="" data="" stream="" error-correction="" utility="" transformed="" temper="" amental="" mainframes="" reliable="" tools="" without="" hamming's="" contribut="" ion="" modern="" pc="" wouldn't="" hamming="" others="" like="" him="" getting="" due="" they="" share="" place="" honor="" 200="" other="" inventors="" entr="" epreneurs="" original="" thinkers="" profiled="" wizards="" wonders="" exhib="" t="" opening="" saturday="" computer="" museum="" here="" features="" photograp="" hs="" computing="" industry="" visionaries="" taken="" portrait="" photographer="" louis="" fabian="" bachrach="" along="" artifacts="" first="" device="" ever="" feature="" microprocessor="" chip="" japanese="" calculator="" berners-lee's="" paper="" detailing="" plans="" world="" wide="" web="" brainchild="" gwen="" bell="" founding="" president="" director="" collections="" museum="" who="" commissioned="" bachrach="" take="" photos="" because="" she="" felt="" only="" its="" kind="" u.s.="" didn't="" give="" enough="" details="" people="" behind="" wonders="" technology="" hear="" talking="" museum's="" apple="" i="" computer="" designed="" garage="" steve="" jobs="" wozniak="" handful="" remain="" existence="" these="" not="" brought="" us="" inventions="" make="" work="" t

hey've="" whole="" new="" creative="" environment,"="" bell="" said.="" said="" took="" years="" trips="" around="" whitfield="" diffie="" inventor="" public="" key="" cryptography;="" mit="" professor="" sherry="" turkle;="" founder="" no lan="" bushnell;="" douglas="" engelbart,="" mouse.="" (he="" logged="" 150,000="" frequent-flier="" miles="" project.)="" exhibit,="" talks="" he="" do="" get="" gates="" sit="" still="" long="" his="" shot.="" sometimes="" when="" you're="" under="" pressure,="" recalling="" spent="" week="" chasing="" microsoft="" corp.="" ceo="" finally="" agreed="" portrait.="" picture,="" few="" minutes="" preparation,="" bachrach's="" favorites="" exhibit.="" reflect="" personalities="" subjects.="" intuit="" inc.="" scott="" cook="" sits="" bare-legged="" casual="" shirt="" shorts,="" while="" oracle="" larry="" ellison="" elegantly="" dressed,="" right="" down="" cuff="" links.="" was="" impossible="" many="" cases="" decide="" which="" pieces="" information="" leave="" out="" biographical="" profiles="" accompanying="" photos,="" christopher="" morgan,="" member="" board="" directors="" former="" communications="" vice="" lotus="" development="" morgan="" wrote="" companion="" book="" title="" will="" be="" available="" next="" month.="" run="" six="" months,="" being="" sponsored="" goldman="" sachs="" &="" co.,="" donated="" \$50,000="" funding,="" oliver="" strimpel,="" executive="" museum.="" association="" machinery="" helped="" underwrite="" cost="" producing="" book.="" altogether,="" \$150,000="" produce,="" strimpel="" idc="" predicts="" holiday="" spending="" boost="" home="" digital="" products="" sales="" framin gham,="" mass.="" nov.="" 18="" prnewswire="" there="" something="" tree="" this="" season?="" maybe,="" likely,="" according="" international="" corporation="" (idc).="" heading="" season="" 1998,="" expects="" market="" grow="" 19="" per cent="" year-end="" reach="" \$37.8="" million.="" however,="" much="" growth="" stem="" continuing="" demand="" developed="" videogame="" console="" hardware="" software="" products.="" digital="" santa="" way,="" may="" time="" year's="" season,="" william="" zinsmeister,="" senior="" analyst="" idc's="" consumer="" devices="" research="" program="" market="" newer="" dvd-movie="" players,="" nettv,="" tv="" convergence="" developing,="" these="" segments="" amount="" significant="" near-term="" opportunities.="" sector="" continues="" dominated="" analog="" revolution="" longer-term="" play="" here="" trends="" see="" 1998:="" pcs="" shipments="" increasing="" 16="" year-end,="" well="" 63="" million="" games="" entertainment="" shipped="" end="" year,="" increase="" 31="" percent.="" year="" sequels,="" riven="" broderbund,="" quake="" ii="" activision,="" tombraider="" eidos="" consoles="" 1997="" marked="" return="" consoles="" represent="" second-largest="" services="" revenue="" basis="" marquee="" titles="" sony="" nintendo,="" mario="" kart="" 64="" final="" fantasy="" vii,="" sold="" 500,000="" units="" each="" year="" continued="" 32-bit="" playstation="" 64-bit="" nintendo="" drive="" total="" almost="" \$5.5="" billion="" up="" 32="" year-ago="" period="" expected="" 3rd-party="" company="" winners="" include="" a cclaim="" electronic="" arts,="" eidos,="" midway="" dbs="" direct="" broadcast="" satellite="" vendors="" continue="" attack="" 62="" cable="" household="" opportunity,="" believes="" penetration="" points="" seven="" year-end="" annual="" subscription="" revenues="" should="" double="" \$2.9="" overall="" customer="" base="" increases="" dvd="" 200,000="" players="" year-to-date="" moderately="" 400,000="" performance="" would="" mass-market="" platform="" rollout="" holds="" tremendous="" promise="" manufacturing="" mature="" sell-through="" rental="" industries="" ramp-up="" production="" nettv="" unit="" 265,000="" despite="" low="" price="" (sub-\$300),="" adoption="" far="" limited="" category="" potential="" pursue="" business="" model="" television="" content="" can="" integrated="" internet="" content="" tvs="" likely="" won't="" any="" less="" 12,000="" average="" prices="" \$5,000,="" product="" niche="" high-income,="" early="" adopters="" online="" 20="" \$3.6="" billion="" (idc="" 14809)="" purchase="" contacting="" janis="" dempsey="" 508-935-4145="" or="" via="" (jdempseyidcresearch.com).="" additional="" program,="" please="" contact="" dara="" queen="" 508-935-4585="" (dqueenidcresearch.com).="" gaming="" section="" sonic="" 'r'!="" turok!="" powervr!="" cool="" boarders="" 2="" more!="" >From the Editor's Controller - Playin' it like it is!

This is the time of year when I miss hearing news from Atari - COMDEX. This is when anyone and everyone shows off their latest and greatest software and hardware. The show pretty much takes over Las Vegas for a week; and from what I've been reading, the shows are getting fancier and fancier with each new year. This year wasn't any different. For the gamers, lots of new stuff coming your way. In this week's issue, we captured some of that news and brought it to you as just a sampling of what's ahead. We hope that you enjoy the news.

Until next time...

Industry News STR Game Console NewsFile - The Latest Gaming News!

The World's Fastest Hedgehog Races to the 3D Environment

REDWOOD CITY, CALIF. (Nov. 17) BUSINESS WIRE - Nov. 17, 1997 - Dust off the track spikes. Get out the checkered flag. 'Sonic the Hedgehog' is ready to RACE! Sega of America announced today the premier of the newest Sonic the Hedgehog game -- "Sonic R." Sonic is now taking it to the race track in full 360 degree 3D. The game will be available in stores nationwide starting Nov. 18, exclusively for Sega Saturn.

Combining racing and action genres, Sega has created an all-new gaming experience for every Sonic fan. In "Sonic R," gamers assume the role of Sonic or one of his four pals -- Tails, Knuckles, Amy or Dr. Robotnik. Players race against the other characters to find the stolen Chaos Emeralds, collect gold rings and make it to the finish line, all the way looking for hidden power-ups and short-cuts in the expansive, fully-explorable 3D environments. "Sonic appeals to everyone, from kids to kids at heart," said Bernard Stolar, chief operating officer, Sega of America. "Sonic R adds to our fall Sega Saturn line-up by providing a fun gaming experience that every member of the family will enjoy."

And gamers have a rich experience with "Sonic R." The game contains five areas in which to race, including Resort Island, Radical City, Regal Ruin, Reactive Factory and a special secret zone, Radiant Emerald. Each course and character is rendered in full, colorful 360 degree 3D. The incredibly detailed graphics and speed were developed using proprietary "12 Layer Distance Cross Fading," which utilizes the Sega Saturn's second graphics processor to draw 12 layers of transparency to create objects smoothly without the "pop-up" found in other 3D games. Three modes of play -- Grand Prix, Time Attack, and Versus Mode, featuring exciting two-player split screen action -- add an even deeper dimension to "Sonic R:"

Grand Prix Mode

In Grand Prix Mode, players race against all five characters in all four areas to find the Chaos Emerald and score the best time. But they shouldn't forget to look for hidden areas and tokens. Collect all the tokens and score a hidden character. Finish first in each area to access a secret track.

Time Attack Mode

Time Attack Mode features four separate racing options -- normal, reverse, tag and balloon. It's the player versus the clock in Time Attack Mode as he/she race to score his/her personal best time. In the normal option,

racers select the course and let it fly. In reverse, they run the course the opposite direction. The tag option challenges gamers to catch up to other characters on the course and tag them out. In the balloon option, players must race the course, breaking all the balloons along the way. The race isn't over until all the balloons are burst.

Versus Mode

It is head-to-head racing in the Versus Mode, as players battle it out in split-screen action. Two players select their characters and their course and then hit the track. May the fastest gamer win!

History of Sonic

Since his birth, Sonic has had a history of appearing in games that anyone can pick up and enjoy. Sonic the Hedgehog was universally applauded upon his release in 1991. Sales of "Sonic" skyrocketed, selling more than two million units that year alone. By year's end, the "blue dude with a 'tude" had the highest penetration of any video game in history, breaking the previous record set by Atari's "Space Invaders."

The release of "Sonic 2" in 1992 heralded in another benchmark, as the game sold more than 400,000 units in just five days to become the top selling 16-bit game of all time. By 1995, sales of Sonic games had reached 50 million units. Today, Sonic is a cultural phenomenon, having had his own float in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, his own cartoon, his own SpaghettiO's and even a Christmas television special. "Sonic R" continues the rich tradition of the blue hedgehog by bringing tons of fun to the masses.

"Sonic R" will be available in stores for \$49.99 SRP. "Sonic R" supports the enhanced 3D analog control pad for Sega Saturn.

PowerVR and Activision Combine Forces to Bring Top Games

Eagerly Anticipated Sequel, Formidable New Game Introduced at Comdex

LAS VEGAS, Nov. 17 /PRNewswire/ -- Comdex/Fall Booth L2612 -- NEC Electronics Inc. and VideoLogic(R) today announced that two game titles from Activision, Inc. will utilize the PowerVR(TM) 3D graphics acceleration graphics technology. The collaboration on these games demonstrates the companies' commitment to bringing the most sought-after titles in the industry to PowerVR-enhanced PCs.

Developed by NEC Electronics and VideoLogic in 1996, PowerVR's exceptional 3D graphics capabilities offer bilinear filtering, colored lighting, translucency and fast frame rates at resolutions up to 1024 x 768 pixels. The PowerVR architecture enhances PC-based 3D graphics software, providing gamers with luminous, distinctive images at breakneck speed.

"Nightmare Creatures(TM)" and "Hexen II(TM)" are the latest PC titles to emerge from the creative collaboration. The titles are designed to provide the consumer with arcade-quality performance, affording the most visually realistic, fervently engaging gaming experience available on the personal computer.

"By teaming up with Activision in the development of some of the most eagerly anticipated titles of the year, PowerVR is achieving our mission of delivering incredible gaming entertainment at unprecedented value," said Charles Bellfield, product marketing manager, multimedia strategic business

unit, NEC Electronics. "The gamers who play these Activision titles will feel the brawn of PowerVR."

"Activision is committed to bringing the most compelling, challenging and visually awesome games to the market. With the PowerVR architecture, we can offer gamers incomparable 3D graphics performance, and turn the home PC into a virtual arcade experience," said Bobby Kotick, chairman and CEO, Activision, Inc.

'TUROK: Dinosaur Hunter' Roars Into PowerVR-Enhanced PCs

Acclaim's Thrill-Packed Shooter Is Latest PowerVR Ready Title

LAS VEGAS, Nov. 17 /PRNewswire/ -- Comdex Booth L2612 -- NEC Electronics Inc. and VideoLogic(R) today announced "Turok(R): Dinosaur Hunter," the chart-topping console hit from Acclaim(R) Entertainment, Inc., will join the PowerVR(TM) title roster this holiday season.

Based on the Acclaim Comics/Valiant Heroes title and the popular Acclaim Nintendo(R) 64 game, "Turok" takes full advantage of the PowerVR 3D graphics acceleration technology capable of delivering explosive action and breathtakingly realistic 3D effects.

The PowerVR architecture combines on-chip hidden-surface removal with a unique method of texture mapping and a reduced memory architecture to bring 3D images to life. High-performance features, including bilinear and adaptive bilinear filtering, fogging and dithering from 16- to 32-bit color, allow "Turok" to run at maximum efficiency as dinosaurs charge out from the mist, waterfalls boil with foam, and trees explode into flames and crash to the ground.

"From raging dinosaurs to fiery explosions, 'Turok' on PowerVR screams with realism and artistic imagination," said Charles Bellfield, product marketing manager, multimedia strategic business unit, NEC Electronics. "PC gamers have been eagerly awaiting this title and with PowerVR, they can have it in all its glory. It can be purchased through retailers including Best Buy(R), CompUSA(R) and Electronics Boutique(R).

Cool Boarders 2 Shreds Onto the PlayStation

FOSTER CITY, CALIF. (Nov. 14) BUSINESS WIRE - Nov. 11, 1997 - Sony Computer Entertainment America Inc. announced today that Cool Boarders(TM) 2, the sequel to last year's hot-selling snowboarding videogame, is now available exclusively for the PlayStation(TM) game console -- with all new Burton(R) snowboards, a 2-player mode, challenging new courses and better-than-ever gameplay and graphics.

Now, with Cool Boarders 2, gamers can enjoy the popular and fast growing sport of snowboarding via the PlayStation. This year's all-new version of the tremendously popular Cool Boarders series provides brilliant real-time rendered 3D graphics and a choice of 18 Burton(R) snowboards to ride while "tear'n' it up" on any of nine all-new challenging downhill courses.

"Playing Cool Boarders 2 is an experience that offers the thrill of snowboarding in an intense videogame environment," said Peter Dille, senior director, product marketing, Sony Computer Entertainment America.

"Gameplayers will be amazed at the number of new moves and features they can perform."

The gameplay in Cool Boarders 2 has been designed to test each gamer's snowboarding abilities, with classic jumping maneuvers and the addition of

40 new moves. Also new is the challenging half pipe, freestyle mode, Big Air contest and brand new board park. The all-new two-player mode means gamers can now snowboard and compete against their fellow Shredders. Cool Boarders 2 Key Features -- 2-player mode -- 18 new Burton snowboards -- New Half-Pipe -- New Big Air contest -- New Freestyle mode -- New Board Park -- Nine new downhill tracks -- All the classic jumping maneuvers plus 40 new maneuvers -- Men and Women riders to choose from -- 3D polygonal characters, tracks and real-time rendering.

Intelligent Qube Challenges the Mind; Addictive 3D Puzzle

FOSTER CITY, CALIF. (Nov. 17) BUSINESS WIRE - Nov. 17, 1997 - Sony Computer Entertainment America announced today the release of Intelligent Qube, a unique, challenging and addictive 3D puzzle game, exclusive to the PlayStation game console. Intelligent Qube puts the gameplayers strategic thinking and reflex skills to the test in a fast-paced 3D brain twister. Based on their success with each level they can earn bragging rights as to how clever they are or have their intelligence insulted.

The goal of Intelligent Qube is to clear a narrow grid-like stage of an advancing wall of cubes. The player maneuvers their character around the stage in an effort to capture cubes without being crushed or pushed off the stage. The player progresses through the increasingly difficult levels by clearing each stage in the fewest possible moves. The desire to get the best score adds to the highly addictive nature of this game and provides high replay value.

"Intelligent Qube is an excellent example of what Sony Computer Entertainment America means by 'depth and breadth' of PlayStation software," said Andrew House, vice president, marketing, Sony Computer Entertainment America. "Because of the PlayStation's CD-ROM format, we're singularly able to bring unique and challenging puzzle games like intelligent Qube to market, providing gamers the diversity they desire."

In Intelligent Qube, players "mark" a spot on the stage in front of the cube they want to capture. When the cube is on top of the activated spot, the player presses the "X" button and captures the cube. Adding to the game's excitement and challenge are "advantage" and "forbidden" cubes that are interspersed with the normal cubes. "Advantage" cubes are green cubes that when captured can be activated at the appropriate time to capture all cubes surrounding it - allowing the player to capture multiple cubes at one time. "Forbidden" cubes are imposing black cubes that will disintegrate a row of the stage if captured by a mark, penalizing the player by shortening the length of the field.

Naki Introduces Advanced Light Gun

PACOIMA, Calif., Nov. 17 /PRNewswire/ -- Get ready to knock them dead! When the safest place for a gamer is behind the trigger, the Naki Nintendo 64 Lunar Gun is a must have. The new accessory from Naki International, a leading supplier of high-performance video gaming accessories, provides advanced score-raising light gun features for all shooting games for the Nintendo 64.

"For gamers who want to maximize both their scores and their fun, the N64 Lunar Gun has the most advanced, most innovative light gun features available," said Moe Sapiro, National Sales Manager for Naki. "And the red sight attachment makes it into a 100% target killer." The Lunar Gun provides a number of special functions which will enhance any gamer's performance. These include:

- Auto Reload - Prevents the usual reloading delays built into most games, ensuring that the gamer never runs out of ammunition when in a tight spot.
- Auto Fire - Eliminates finger trigger fatigue; Auto Fire keeps the N64 Lunar Gun firing as long as the trigger is held.
- Semi Auto Fire - Automatically fires three shots whenever the trigger is pressed.
- Special Button - A thumb-activated trigger bombs and special weapons, and is used to adjust the reload settings.

Colored LEDs on the side of the gun allow the gamer to monitor the status of all the special functions. Ensuring gamers the maximum mobility and range, the Lunar Gun comes equipped with an eight-foot cord. The Red Sight aiming accessory, which guarantees that gamers will never miss their mark, attaches to the barrel of the Lunar Gun, adding laser aiming to the list of features. The suggested retail price for the N64 Lunar Gun is \$39.99. The MSRP for the optional Red Sight attachment is \$34.99.

GamePro readies holiday issue

SAN MATEO, Calif., Nov. 19 (UPI) -- GamePro, the multiplatform gaming magazine, says its December issue is now available on newsstands to help interactive gamers make their holiday selection. The Holiday Shopper's Guide includes the editorial staff's lists of games that looks at the hottest holiday prospects in all gaming genres and some of the best peripherals to accent your gaming experience.

The publication says one of the hottest games this holiday season is Jedi Knight: Dark Forces II for the PC by LucasArts. It says that if you're a fan of corridor shooters, you know all about Dark Forces which infuses the genre with familiar Star Wars characters and lots of laser-blasting excitement. GamePro gives a comprehensive review of this highly anticipated Star Wars game.

A new section in this year's issue is Spotlight On! that showcases exciting new games and companies, giving you a behind-the-scenes view of the latest gaming news. The issue features David Perry, founder of Shiny Entertainment, who was responsible for such innovative games as MDK.

GamePro gives exclusive strategies in How To Master Madden -- for Madden 64 for the Nintendo 64 and Madden NFL '98 for PlayStation -- by Electronic Arts. Johnny Ballgame has all the secret moves and tactics to master the game.

PEOPLE... ARE TALKING

Compiled by Joe Mirando
jmirando@streport.com

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. Yep, another week closer to the holidays. By this time next week we'll all be feeling guilty about not having started our shopping yet, and resolve to start just as soon as the turkey, stuffing, and cranberry sauce settles in our stomachs. Of course, since I simply love turkey in any form (turkey with gravy, cold turkey sandwiches, turkey soup, etc.) I always try to make sure that I've got enough turkey to last me clear through to New Years, so if you're expecting a present from me for the holidays, don't hold your breath.
<grin>

As expected, it's slow in the Atari world (yeah Kreskin, tell me another one!) and it's probably not going to get any better. Perhaps if the Atari line of computers had been better marketed and upgraded instead of sold until the masses lost interest and then slashing the price instead of adding value there might have been a chance for our favorite machines. Of course the same thing happened to the Amiga. Although it was upgraded for speed, it was always a step behind the competition and just couldn't rely on those who used the machine for video production and modeling.

It seems to me that these two companies (Atari and Commodore) made the same mistake. They TOLD the customer what it was that they should want. This time, as in the majority of circumstances, listening would have been better than talking. But did IBM, the originator of the PC, listen to customers? Probably only slightly more than Atari and Commodore did. But they had the advantage of their name. All most folks had to hear was the name 'IBM' and they instantly believed that this was the epitome of desktop computers. They were wrong, of course. I can remember seeing either a PC-XT or '286 PC-AT on display next to an Atari 520 ST way back when.

There simply was no comparison. The PC had a monochrome monitor, no sound, 5.25 inch floppy drives, no mouse (why would they need a mouse for DOS commands?), and about half the memory of the ST, and even at that, it had to use the memory only in 64k chunks. And in the speed category, the ST won also. Using TOS on the ST may have been our only choice, but it was easy to use, standard to the platform, and took up no memory. On the PC side, you had several possible operating systems, each of which required special software, knowledge of commands, and memory.

So, when did things change? When others started making PC "clones" and Microsoft started selling operating systems to all of them. There goes the lead we had in the standard OS category. The other biggie, as I've already said, was the ability, willingness, and foresight to constantly upgrade and improve the state-of-the-art.

Is all of this upgrading and envelope-pushing the best option? Actually, from the user's standpoint, I don't think it really matters. But it does keep the technology marching on and the revenues rolling in. In today's world, he who hesitates is truly lost.

I can remember being a kid and really enjoying being lost. It was an adventure. The world was full of things that I'd never seen before. All those new experiences and the equal joy of reaching familiar surroundings again when I was finished balanced each other out and taught me that you don't always have to follow the crowd. It sort of reminds me of a song by Harry Chapin, my all-time favorite musician. "We see the people, we see them marching down. Do we join the parade, or do we try and turn around?"

I think that's the question that we should always be asking ourselves. Do we do what everyone else is doing or do we 'zig' when everyone else 'zags'? If nothing else, we'll make the others wonder what else is out there.

Well, let's take a look at what's going on at Delphi.

From the Delphi Atari Advantage Forum

When Greg Evans asks about a compression method called StuffIt, and how it could be de-compressed on the ST, "Turbo" Nick posts:

"There is... an ST program that will extract files compressed with the Mac program StuffIt. It's called UNSIT. My users' group's ST library has it (on the very last Disk of the Month, which disks aren't numbered by month - go figure ;-). The version we have is 1.5. I've never tried it (I had never heard of StuffIt before as I'm not a Mac user)."

I tell Nick:

"The only reason that I knew that there was a StuffIt utility available for the ST is that someone once sent me a compressed file, and figured that, since the ST used the same CPU as the Mac, a Mac compression format would be the best thing..."

My friend Alejandro Aguilar adds:

"for those Windoze machines, you can use a program called WinZip, that recognizes .sit files and decompresses them (also .tar and .gzip files).."

Ale also tells me:

"The fact that the .sit format is from a machine with a 680x0 processor, doesn't mean that it is better. The compression formats are independent of the processor, although the ZIP one was originally intended for commercial use in the Wintel world. As better compression formats, I think .ARJ is the better (at this moment there are new formats - .RAR and .RAJ - based in .ARJ that are better, but I only on Windoze machines).

Maybe we, the atarians, could use a new standard instead of ZIP, which is a bit unstable sometimes."

I reply to Ale:

"It is true that because sit was developed for a machine with a Motorola CPU doesn't mean that the compression program is any better... just the computer! <g>

My reason for mentioning that the person who sent me the file compressed it with StuffIt was that he assumed that all the program required was a 680x0 processor. He was, of course,

wrong.

I was really hoping that ZIP would get a bit 'better' and then become the standard for all time. Of course, there will be newer, better, more reliable compression programs coming along, and we'll have to scramble to find programs to make use of them."

Greg Evans jumps in and tells us:

[This is] "Sort of off the subject, but a few years back I developed my own compression method for a client that needed to store massive amounts of data -- uncompressed, the file would have been >2 gb! Ok, with 3,4,6,8 and now 12 gb IDE drives that's not such a big deal any more but it was then -- their entire network partition was only 2.5 gb. Anyway, the nice thing about this method is that you could decompress the file in memory one record at a time so that a program could read and process just what it needed -- no need to uncompress the whole thing to disk. I've thought about rewriting it in some portable format -- C, for instance, and making it available as a routine for other programs. The down side was, I could never get better than 10:1 compression because I could only compress within a record."

Tony Greenwood (aka STOSser) tells us:

"<http://www.airtime.co.uk/users/stosser>

On my page you will find a zip file with a few..JPG's from the UK show, sorry no index,

Also The November Issue 22 of ST+ Diskmag

It would seem at the UK shows the guys that run the diskmag asked everyone about changing to HTML and it would seem they all said NO.. hmm in my view that is a shame as html is not only an internet tool, it is a great Multimedia authoring package for any ATARI user, probably the best Multimedia package there is for a bog standard ATARI.. ha well..."

I reply to Tony:

"I'm sure that this will give you a warm fuzzy. <g> I agree with you about HTML being a good MM package for the ST. The only drawback is that the graphics are not inbedded in the page itself. In other words, you need a separate file for each graphic on the page instead of just the page as if

it would appear in, say, an Adobe PDF file. (Yes, I know that you know this, but others might not, so I figured I'd spell it out as best I could right at the start <g>)

As a matter of fact, my wife and I recently purchased all of the negatives of our wedding pictures (there are between 4 and 5 hundred of them). I want I want to have them all converted over to PhotoCD and build an HTML index of them so that I can have a virtual wedding album. The downside is that having all of those negatives put on CDROM isn't going to be cheap.

But if I ever do get around to it, I think it'll be kind of neat."

Tony tells me:

"Someone agreeing with me always cheers me up <smile>

Yes..The good news is that about TWO years ago I made a multimedia authoring package that would work on a STFM one meg upwards, would allow large text files, with Coloured text, embedded fonts (15 of them) chip music, sampled sound, Pictures and animations.. when authored it would pack and save it all as one file,

The author and viewer program was about 90k in total, and you could set it to auto view :)

The bad news is it doesn't support higher than ATARI medium res, a limitation caused because of the text format ie: most text files are 78>

I offered to support other colour modes and make updates... not one person replied in 2 years ?

hehehe, maybe we all think alike.. with 5 children I have a massive amount of photographs, I got a 24bit true colour hand scanner (perfect for photos) and the idea is to make my own interactive CD complete with sounds ect,

But simply haven't had time. my ATARI projects take all my time and the PC ones such as that take a back seat.. but one day..

You're right, it is an excellent idea, because one day in the years to come, everyone will have CD's and be able to easily copy and view the ones you make now <smile>"

I tell Tony:

"The other thing I like about the PhotoCD idea is that they are a bit more sturdy than negatives. And even if CDs turn out to be less 'permanent' than we figure that they are, I'll still have both the CDs and the negs."

Greg Evans tells me:

"This is what I read about CDs when I started using a CD recorder two years ago:

Life expectancy of
Gold CDs ~100 years
Silver CDs ~20 years
Green CDs ~ 7 years <-- these are generally the ones sold for recording.

Silver CDs are the pressed kind, they aren't recordable."

Now Greg gets a bit adventurous:

"I was playing around with Magic 5/Ease 5 to see if I could read some files on a DOS CD which TOS and Geneva/Neodesk couldn't "see". I was hoping I could turn on the VFAT option and examine the files. Unfortunately, I couldn't use that option on my CD partition. I decided to try something else instead.

I have a 14 meg Falcon with AUTO programs of Extendos, NVDI 4

with 500+ fonts, Outburts, STiK, HSMODEM7, Screen Artist (modular screen saver) and the Falcon patches. I started launching applications. When I was done I had CAB 2.0, Gemview 3.17, Imagecopy 4, Kandinsky 2.5 (vector graphics creator), Texel 1.6 (spreadsheet), Papyrus 4, Face value 1.1 (GFA program generator), Kobold 2 and Arabesque 2 (another vector graphics editor) loaded as well as the ACCs XControl, Screen Artist control panel and STiK TCP/IP. I also had run the Magic programs StartMeUp!, Olga and XMEM_MGR.

The amazing thing is after all that I still had ~2.4 mb RAM free!

Don't try that on Windows 95. <grin>"

Mark Showalter asks:

"Has anybody seen these internet adds about having a permanante e-mail address, anything you want? I've seen it a couple of times & am wondering if it's a legit add, & if it's truely free as the add claims."

Gordie Meyer tells Mark:

"They are legit, but there are some things to be careful about. Some are limited to people who can use their proprietary software (juno.com in particular). Some have become known as sources of significant SPAM and have been blocked by some ISPs. But, if you know you'll be changing ISPs with some frequency, they can provide an unchanging place for people to send you email.

How does it work? You sign up for an account, sometimes providing fairly extensive information about yourself that's used to determine which email ads best fit you. Some allow you to automatically forward your email to another account (and easily change where it's forwarded). Some require that you log into their mail server using whatever internet access you have.

So, if you have the right system, don't mind having some people see your address as some kind of spammer heaven, and don't mind getting email ads sanctioned by the address provider, it's not a bad deal."

Mark tells Gordie:

"Thanks for the reply. What in the world is SPAM? Other than the favorite food for Monty Python Vikings, I'm not familliar with this term."

Gordie tells Mark:

"Hormel isn't wild about its use, but the term SPAM is used to describe unsolicited commercial email or commercial usenet posts that aren't upfront about their commercialism. It's essentially the online equivalent of junk mail."

Well folks, on that tasty note, we'll call it quits and get ready for the Thanksgiving Day turkey and all the trimmings. Did I mention that I LOVE turkey? <grin>

Have a happy and safe Holiday. And always remember to listen to what they are saying when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

In Memoriam..
November 22, 1963

John Fitzgerald Kennedy

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